

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON.

Gary Ross

David O'Connor

FADE IN:

ON THE HEADWATERS OF THE AMAZON.

Pristine and wild. The CAMERA creeps over the river at water level while the jungle sounds blend together in music: monkeys, parrots, the rustling of an animal darting through the undergrowth.

All at once there's another sound. Loud, abrasive and not from the jungle:

VOICE

Pinche. No me te dijo. Vienes par
bines la machina!

The CAMERA creeps around a bend in the river to reveal a rusting hulk of an iron raft with a large dredging machine on top. It's really a big conveyor belt. There are huge shovels plunging down into the river driven by a massive diesel engine. The three men are rollicking drunk on the side of the raft. There is a small metal boat beside them.

CLOSER. RAFT

They continue to laugh and hoot as one of them finally gets the engine started. It belches exhaust and rattles to life as the conveyor belt starts to move. He pulls back a lever and the huge contraption begins to churn up mud from the river bottom, depositing it into a large bin at the edge of the raft. These are gold miners.

2ND MAN

Cabron! No me dise a ca los Madre.
Que vaca de me pundejo.

After a moment or two the machine sputters and dies. The men laugh as one of them curses and kicks at the side of it. He swigs the end of his liquor bottle, chucking it into the river.

CLOSER STILL.

One of the others stumbles/crash-lands into the row boat, almost falling overboard. He fishes around under the seat and finds a second bottle of liquor and some greasy fish wrapped in newspaper. The stuff is coated in bright red hot sauce.

1ST MAN

(holding it up)
Mira! Que so lo me venta!

REVERSE ANGLE.

One of the guys is taking a leak into the water. He zips up/stumbles forward in pursuit of the bounty. Both men fall into the boat at roughly the same time, sending a series of waves out toward the bank of the river. They sprawl backwards, cackling hysterically. One of them takes the fish

EVEN CLOSER.

It's pretty disgusting. He takes a bite getting grease and hot sauce all over his hands. His friend grabs at it, telling him not to finish the whole thing as he reaches over the side of the boat to wash off his fingers.

PAUSE....

He freezes like that for an instant, with a puzzled look on his face. Then a split-second later, he is JERKED OVER THE SIDE OF THE BOAT, HITTING THE WATER WITH A MASSIVE SPLASH. He's pulled under immediately, while the river CHURNS in a torrent of activity.

CLOSE. WATER.

It starts to go red. The man's head bobs to the surface a couple of times, gasping for breath, then gets pulled under, just as fast. His two companions scream at him from the side of the boat, but all they can see is the churning water.

ANGLE. BOAT.

Finally his arm becomes visible and the man reaches down to grab his friend. When he pulls on the hand, however, the arm comes flying out of the water, completely severed from the body, --ripped off just below the shoulder.

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

The guy in the boat looks at the dismembered arm, screams, and flings it overboard. The river has started to go quiet now--still red but no longer violent. He fumbles desperately for the rope on the outboard motor, while the the third guy screams at him to start to engine. He finally manages to give it a jerk, bringing the little outboard to life, and they start off toward the shore, at less than two knots.

INSIDE THE BOAT

It's a tiny motor (three horse power) and they barely seem to be moving, even with the current. The two men head down river, stricken and terrified as the large raft recedes behind them. The whole thing seems agonizingly slow.

LOW ANGLE. BOAT... A STRANGE POV....

The boat moves away at WATER LEVEL, growing slowly smaller in the distance. The CAMERA remains motionless for a beat or two, then changes its mind and STARTS AFTER THE BOAT. It closes in on the two men, gliding smoothly across the water...

MOVING CLOSER....

The sound of the little outboard gets louder as the POV closes in on the rear of the boat.

One of the men glances back over his shoulder in one last terrified look as the CAMERA bores in, right on the engine...

CUT TO

A SCREAM...

Actually a "high C" from the mouth of an opera singer. The note is long, sustained and agonized. The face is painted with a strange Kabuki mask.

"THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON"

INT. OPERA HOUSE. MANAUS BRAZIL.

Built during the rubber boom, for the pleasure of the rubber barons, it's an opulent piece of defiance parked a thousand miles up the Amazon. The painting on the ceiling depicts the underside of the Eiffel Tower. The frescoes on the walls honor the various different arts: music, dance, opera, the symphony...

ANGLE. STAGE.

Madame Butterfly is in the middle of the third act. It's a mournful lament for the chasm between two cultures... between two lovers...

CLOSE UP. THE BRADSHAWs.

They sit side by side staring at the stage with almost the same posture. A stranger wouldn't know if they were married, or had just purchased adjoining seats.

CLOSE UP. CARRIE.

The music swells and she swallows. It's private moment but she's moved. Not moved to tears--just moved.

EXT. MANAUS. NIGHT.

They're a handsome couple. He's in his mid forties... groomed. Cotton safari clothes that you wouldn't wear anywhere else. She's a little looser--a lot younger. A flowing tropical blouse with loud colors... Flowers... The street is colonial--hundred year old brick that has stayed that way since the rubber boom.

JOHN

You know it's stayed this way since the rubber boom.

CARRIE

Really.

JOHN

In 1850 there was more wealth in Manaus than the rest of South America combined.

CARRIE
You and your guide books.

JOHN
What does that mean?

CARRIE
Nothing.

JOHN
Nothing?

CARRIE
C'mon, it's a joke.

JOHN
A little aggressive.

CARRIE
Stop being a shrink.

JOHN
I am a shrink. I can't stop being a shrink.

CARRIE
Well try.

She takes his arm and he tightens slightly.

JOHN
You were the one who wanted to come down here.

CARRIE
You know, I think that's the first time you've said that.

He smiles slightly. Can't help it. She grasps his arm a little tighter.

JUMP CUT TO:

A BAR.

Teeming with life. There's a million people in Manaus and lots of them are crammed in here. It's the full tropical cliché... Ceiling fans, netting on the windows, foreign money taped behind the bar...

JOHN
No ice.

A blank look from the bartender.

JOHN
 (points to the glass)
 Ice. No ice.
 (to Carrie)
 What's ice.

She shrugs. He fumbles at the back of the guide book.

CUSTOMER (ROBERTO)
 Sem Gelo por lo senjor.

The bartender nods and pours.

JOHN
 Oh... Thanks.

ROBERTO
 You know you don't have to worry.
 Manaus is all deep water wells. We
 have the cleanest water in South
 America.

JOHN
 (beat)
 Well, still...

ROBERTO
 I make you a deal. We drink it
 together.. That way we both die at
 once.

Big smile. John looks over at Carrie...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE.

John and Carrie sit with the man from the bar and his wife.
 They are a well groomed couple in their early sixties--alive
 and dynamic. No one in South America goes to bed before
 midnight.

CARRIE
 I used to work with an organization
 that protected the rain forest.

ROBERTO
 Ah. Wonderful.

CARRIE
 ...and I'd always wanted to see it
 so....

ADRIANA
 (Roberto's wife)
 What did you do?

JOHN
She was a research fellow.

Beat...

CARRIE
I was a research fellow.

ADRIANA
Scientist?

CARRIE
...Sort' of.

ADRIANA
Ah--bravo.

CARRIE
(shrugs)
It was a long time ago.

ROBERTO
Well--it's an old jungle, no?

JOHN
Carrie was actually sick for a long time.

ADRIANA
Oh, no--my dear...

JOHN
She had CFS...

ROBERTO
Sorry.

CARRIE
It doesn't matter.

ROBERTO
CFS?

CARRIE
Chronic Fatigue.... You know, where you're tired all the time.

ROBERTO
Ah. You are tired. You want to go?

CARRIE
No...
(laughs)
I'm fine now... It was just...

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

A young boy carrying wooden cages is standing next to the table. He's hawking exotic animals from deep in the rain forest: Parrots, howler monkeys, a lemur, some bright green lizards... He's barefoot and speaks a little bit of "tourist."

BOY
Pa-rots? You like? Monkey? Three
monkey...

He starts to take one out of the cage when Roberto interrupts in an Indian dialect, shooing the boy away. He starts to go then turns back to Carrie.

BOY
(pointing at her)
Xa-mal-kato.

CARRIE
What?

He stares right in her eyes--fixed on her. He smiles--slightly surprised.

BOY
Xa-mal-kato.

Roberto laughs then rattles off something in the dialect and the boy heads off. Carrie turns to him.

CARRIE
What did he say?

ROBERTO
(laughs)
Well--he is from the River--know, way
up river, so it doesn't really
translate but...

CARRIE
Yeah?

ROBERTO
He says you are Xamalkato...
(laughs)
Like a... "jungle person."

Carrie turns and stares at the boy as he recedes with the cages...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

They're fucking. Tropical Hotel Manaus has a private zoo, so sounds of the animals outside are blending with the sounds the animals inside.

The room is completely dark except for the ghostlike outline of the mosquito netting over the bed. The windows are open.

CLOSER

You can make out their bodies--rhythmic, entwined... All at once, they stop.

What? CARRIE

What? JOHN

You stopped. CARRIE

So did you. JOHN

CLOSER. INSIDE THE NETTING...

Frozen for beat. .

What? CARRIE

Are you okay? JOHN

We're having sex John. I'm supposed to get fatigued. CARRIE

I know I just.... JOHN

There's a loud SCREECH from a howler monkey outside. He rolls off of her.

Sorry. I just... still worry. JOHN

I know. CARRIE
(sympathetic)

I shouldn't. I mean, if I was the patient, it'd be different... JOHN

I'm not your patient anymore. CARRIE
(softly)

Right. JOHN
(dry)

They lie like that. She leans on his chest. He doesn't move.
Another screech from outside....

CUT TO

EXT. PORTO DE MANAUS (MANAUS RIVER PORT.) DAY.

It is teeming with life. Pushcarts. Vendors. Trucks laden with cargo. Crates loaded on and crates loaded off. Dozens of local river boats. "Cargas" cluster around a floating dock like insects. Manaus is the largest port on the Amazon and the place is jammed with people.

EXT. CARGA.

John and Carrie stand on the deck of one of the smaller riverboats. Their luggage is sitting on the dock. It's a little incongruous: a pile of Louis Vuitton next to this rusting hulk with peeling paint. John turns out toward the rail.

JOHN
(sotto voce)
It's a lot smaller than I thought.

CARRIE
It's just us.

JOHN
Still...
(surveys the boat)
...You sure this is the one in the picture.

CAPTAIN
(crashing the frame)
You see your cabin?

JOHN
Um, yeah...

CAPTAIN
Is nice, no?

They exchange a look.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMAZON DAY.

They have left Manaus behind and the jungle has erupted all around them. The little Carga chugs its way up the Amazon alone in a universe of green. Despite the small size, it's a two story boat with a second floor "balcony" circling the cabins on the top--like a latin interpretation of a Mississippi river boat.

EXT. DECK.

Carrie stands out near the bow staring at her jungle. There's a little breeze blowing from up river and she closes her eyes for an instant to smell it. The moment lingers....

JOHN

Carrie!

She opens her eyes.

JOHN

Honey. C'mere. Listen to this...

INT. SALON.

Salon is a nice way of putting it. A large open room attached to the bridge with a peeling wooden floor and some very old furniture. John is sitting in an outdoor deck chair. He's reading from the brochure

JOHN

"...Treetops lodge affords the utmost in guest comfort, two hundred feet above ground. In your own private 'treehouse' you will enjoy every amenity offered to you by a fine hotel. Private bath with outdoor shower, king sized bed, even room service delivered to your 'cabin' from our own gourmet restaurant...."

(beat)

Sounds pretty good.

CARRIE

Absolutely.

JOHN

(a giddy relief)

Get this: "And for the traveler who needs to keep in touch, our satellite telephone provides international dialing on a limited basis."

(beat)

I can check in.

CARRIE

Thank God.

He shoots her a look. It's playful and still...

JOHN

How long till we get there?

EXT. RIVER

A cayman cuts through the water in advance of the bow as the "barca" makes its way upriver.

They are out of the Rio Negro into the pure Amazon now, and the water has turned a murky brown.

INT. SALON.

John still reads the brochure for what must be the tenth time. It's past curiosity or even enthusiasm--this is Bible study. The engines of the Barca drone relentlessly beneath him. He glances up.

HIS POV

Carrie stands on deck toward the bow looking out toward the bank. She soaks it in for a second then lifts her binoculars....

SEVERAL POV'S... THE JUNGLE. (THROUGH HER BINOCULARS)

It's her mind's eye come to life: A spider monkey... a harpy eagle... A tapir drinking down by the riverbank... The noises of the jungle blend together in a weird cackling harmony. It could last forever...

JOHN (O.S.)

What do you see?

WIDER.

Standing next to her. Moves close. She smiles..

CARRIE

There's a family of tapirs... Right there by that log.

She hands him the binoculars. He looks for a beat....

CARRIE

See that fig tree?

JOHN

Yeah...

CARRIE

It's called a keystone species. Seventy percent of the animals in the area live off that fruit.

JOHN

How do you know all this?

CARRIE

I've always known all this.

JOHN

Ow!

He swats at his arm, dropping the glasses.

JOHN
(shock/insult....)
I got bitten.

CARRIE
What?

JOHN
Something bit me.

He looks at his arm.

CARRIE
It's probably just a mosquito.

JOHN
...Big mosquito.

CARRIE
Well--they have big mosquitos..

He looks at the bite for a moment.

CARRIE
Lemme see.

JOHN
It's fine.

CARRIE
Seriously.

JOHN
I'm okay.

He pulls away from her... "composed" again. They stand for a moment when all at once there is a bang and the boat lurches to the right. Both of them grab the rail.

JOHN
What was that?

The boat starts to slow...

JOHN
What was that?

CUT TO:

EXT. BOAT. LATER...

It is parked by the edge of the riverbank. "Bank" is actually a misnomer. Right here, the river is a flooded forest with the trunks of trees protruding strangely from the surface. Off in the distance, the river becomes a murky brown shadow receding to infinity.

CLOSER.

One of the crew members is swimming near the back of the boat in his underwear. The Captain yells at him in Portuguese and the young man dives under the surface, returning a moment later, shaking his head. The captain grows more agitated.

ANGLE. JOHN AND CARRIE.

They hover near the stern. John stands motionless--almost frozen: sick with "calm". The two men continue to yell in Portuguese, while John tries to decipher the context. All at once he glances over the rail and freezes...

REAR OF BOAT.

The argument is continuing only now the crew member holds the boat's propeller in his hands. It's large and old and severely banged up with one of the blades bent at a ninety degree angle.

JUMP TO:

EXT. DECK. LATER...

They stand near the stern. John is face to face with the captain.

JOHN
Absolutely not!

CAPTAIN
Senjor....

JOHN
No we paid for this. We PAID for you
to take us to treetops lodge...

CAPTAIN
Senjor--is a little village, fifteen
kilometers. They have a radio phone...

JOHN
No! I'm not GETTING OFF THIS BOAT!

CARRIE
Honey...

JOHN
(to the captain)
So you want us to walk through the
jungle to go look for help?

CAPTAIN
Well--is the only place to find
help....

CARRIE

(private whisper)

Honey--if it's the only way...

John turns to her. Puts his back to the captain.

JOHN

No, Carrie. What am I gonna do? Am I gonna drag you through the jungle to go look for a radio phone?

CARRIE

....I'm fine.

JOHN

No you're not.

Freeze. A watershed moment. Carrie glances down at the deck. She's a little shaken.

JOHN

I'm not doing this for me... Remember Portugal?

CARRIE

That was four years ago.

JOHN

(tense whisper)

You want to a relapse?

CAPTAIN

Senjor....

WIDER.

He inches forward into their space...

CAPTAIN

Senjor, look... We go to the village. You'll be safe here. Three, maybe four hours...

JOHN

(turns)

Oh.

(sinks in)

...Alright.

CAPTAIN

(heading for the railing)

We come back. I promise.

The Captain smiles (silver toothed) and starts down the ladder that leads to his dinghy....

JOHN
(glancing around)
Okay.

CUT TO:

THE SUN

Blazing huge and orange just above the treeline. It's late afternoon and clouds have started to gather.

LONG SHOT. BOAT

It sits small in the FRAME, anchored up against the trees with jungle in the foreground. The shadows have started to creep across the water. Everything is absolutely still...

CARRIE (O.S.)
I did check them out.

JOHN (O.S.)
With who?

CARRIE (O.S.)
With the tour operator.

JOHN (O.S.)
Who probably gets a kickback.

SHOT. TREE LIMB...

A lizard clings to the bark of the tree. He senses a predator and bloats up his body like a big orange balloon.

CARRIE (O.S.)
Well who was I supposed to check them out with?

JOHN (O.S.)
I don't know Carrie. This was your trip. You wanted to do it. In fact you didn't want me to do it. You said it was "important" to you.

SHOT. SPIDER MONKEY

He swings through the trees... Some birds scatter...

CARRIE (O.S.)
I said the trip was important to me.

JOHN (O.S.)
Fine. The trip. The whole trip. Your trip.... The "autonomy" of the trip...

CARRIE (O.S.)
Whatever.

INT. SALON.

Silence. They, sit, staring past each other on opposite sides of the room. John's in a deck chair. Carrie sits on a locker.

CARRIE

(after a beat)

Look we're fine right here for now...

JOHN

(excessively calm)

We're a thousand miles up the Amazon all alone on a broken down barge. And now the only people who know how to run it--or even know how to figure out where we are, just took off through the jungle.

CARRIE

(swallowing it)

They're coming back.

JOHN

Oh good.

More silence. Water laps at the side of the boat.

JOHN

Listen to that.

CARRIE

What?

John cranes his head.

JOHN

Listen....

(beat--with dread)

...It's raining.

CUT TO:

TWO HOURS LATER.... RAIN.

It's Biblical. Torrential. Epic. If everything grows bigger in the Amazon, so do the storms. The detail of the jungle is totally obscured as huge sheets of water hurtle down from the sky. The whole world looks under water.

FULL SHOT. BOAT.

It's barely discernible in the deluge... in the fading light of dusk. Color, detail, shadows all blend together... The decks are totally swamped.

INT. SALON.

They sit together now. It's deafening inside, basically a huge tin drum. John sits forward rolling a small piece of kleenex in his fingers. Carrie sits on her hands. After a few seconds...

JOHN
Listen...

CARRIE
What?

JOHN
I think it might be letting up.

They listen in "unison" for beat, trying to hear any subtle changes...

CUT TO:

DAWN

It has let up, indeed. The jungle sounds are back and river is shrouded in an early morning fog.

INT. SALON.

Both of them are asleep, passed out on the floor. A HOWLER MONKEY shrinks in the distance. Tropical birds call back and forth.

JOHN.

He opens his eyes. John rifles through his thought process. Where am I? Here? Where's the rain? Gone. Where are the... Oh my God.

WIDER

All at once, John leaps to his feet and runs toward the bridge. The CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM as he hurries into the wheelhouse, and glances around, finding it empty...

EXT. DECK.

He races down the long deck that fronts the pilot house. John flings open door after door glancing into empty rooms.

EXT. STERN.

He stares out over the back of the boat into the pea-soup fog that hangs over the river. John looks at his watch, then glances around in panic.

INT. SALON.

He's breathing hard in the doorway.

JOHN
They're gone.

CARRIE
(waking up)
What?

JOHN
They're gone. They never came back.

ON CARRIE.

She blinks herself awake--glances around.

JOHN
It's seven in the morning and they
never came back.

CARRIE
Well--maybe they were just waiting
for...

EXT. DECK.

John bursts out of the salon and stares out at the river.
It's a solid wall of fog. He clutches the rail. They can't
even see the bank.

CARRIE
(following him out)
We're not gonna starve. We're in the
jungle. There's plenty to eat.

JOHN
Oh, you know what to eat in the jungle?

CARRIE
(tentatively)
Well-yeah. I do.

JOHN
You know. This little experiment in
self-realization is getting a bit out
of control. I'd rather not have to
survive in the jungle... I mean I'm
sure you could... Actually I don't
even know that--but, assuming that you
could....

All of a sudden he stops. John pauses, mid-diatribes (rare for
him) and cranes his head. Slowly subtly a different sound
begins to emerge. It's not from the jungle. This one is made
by man.

DIFFERENT ANGLE. JOHN. AT THE RAIL.

He squints his eyes out into the fog as the SOUND of the MOTOR starts to get louder. It's so small at first the whole thing could just be a hallucination....

HIS POV. A BLANK GREY SCREEN

The fog is dense and at first the outline is barely discernible. But then as the sound of the motor starts to grow, the shape of a huge ship moving up river starts to become clearer.

CLOSER.

If it's real it's remarkable: huge, sleek, modern, and gleaming with steel even in the mist. As it gets closer the size of the ship starts to become imposing. Twenty feet from the bow to the waterline. Two hundred feet overall. There are three rows of windows built into the hull and four decks of ship rising above that. The bridge appears outfitted with every conceivable electronic device and anchor alone is the size of a small life raft. Next to it, on the bow, the name of the vessel is painted in a tasteful maroon with a cursive font.

"DAEDALUS"

ANGLE. JOHN AND CARRIE.

They stare stunned--disbelieving...

ANGLE. DAEDALUS.

It isn't going fast so there's a weird quiet to the whole thing. As the ship gets closer, it cuts through the rising steam, like a huge airship piercing the clouds....

CUT TO:

MORE STEAM

This time it's a classic figurehead that emerges: Carrie steps out of a hot shower into a white, fluffy Frette bathrobe. Monogrammed on the front is the same swirling cursive script: "DAEDALUS."

INT. SHIP'S CORRIDOR. DAY

John and Carrie walk up the sleek modern corridor in matching track suits, with Daedalus embroidered on the left breast pocket. They are being led by an American in his early forties. Morgan Hallowell is polished, well groomed, handsome, assured...

MORGAN

This is a specially outfitted research vessel.

(MORE)

MORGAN (cont'd)
We were specifically designed for Amazon exploration. Except for an occasional trip to Belem, this ship will never touch salt water.

JOHN
Amazing.

He reaches a door and swings it open.

MORGAN
Follow me.

INT. BRIDGE

It is modern and high tech. Instead of brass compasses and spoked wooden wheels there are plasma screens and keyboards. The helmsman stands at a work station with a joystick. A high resolution display shows a profile of the river bottom.

MORGAN
Unfortunately your lodge is up the wrong branch of the river, but we'd be happy to take you to Iquitos. They have a plane back to Manaus twice a week.

A man in a uniform turns from the bridge.

DON
Look who's all cleaned up.

MORGAN
This is Don, our Captain. He's the one who spotted you.

JOHN
Well--thanks, Don.

DON
It's my job.

MORGAN
We're gonna give these two a lift to Iquitos.

DON
I only charge what's on the meter.

JOHN
(all comfortable now)
Very nice of you.

Carrie shoots him a look. He has on his "social" face.

MORGAN
Come on. I'll show you the rest.

INT. CORRIDOR

Unlike the previous hallway, this one is in the business end of the ship. Polished teak has given way to stainless steel walls and a polished linoleum floor. It's bathed in fluorescent lights.

MORGAN

You're free to wander around anywhere on the top three decks. Most of the research is conducted down here, so if there's anything you want to see, just ask me first.

He pauses in front of a door.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

(smiles at Carrie)

Is your cabin alright.

CARRIE

Terrific.

MORGAN

(bigger smile)

Good.

Morgan swings open the door and rests a hand on Carrie's back as he motions for them to go through. It lingers there for a moment while they lock eyes. She moves past him.

INT. SECOND HALLWAY.

They approach a locked door at the end of the hall.

MORGAN

This is the only area that's totally off limits and we keep it locked at all times.

Carrie and John exchange a curious look as Morgan pulls a set of keys from his pocket. He flashes Carrie another slight smile as he fits the key in and turns the lock.

REVERSE ANGLE. THEIR POV

A massive wine cellar stretches out in front of them. There are floor to ceiling bottles all housed in mahogany racks.

MORGAN

We have over two thousand bottles. Some are actually worth a lot of money.

(beat)

It's a long trip.

They glance back at him, slightly shocked.

MORGAN

(smiles)

I know it sounds like I'm bragging, but we don't get to give tours very often. C'mon...

ENGINE ROOM.

Morgan leads them on a small catwalk three or four feet above the huge turbine engines. The place is gleaming and spotless.

MORGAN

(above the noise)

...It has a range of twelve thousand miles. We can make all our own water. The entire ship is sealed in an airlock and biostatically controlled. We can filter out any virus or bacteria down to four microns.

JOHN

(straining to be heard)

Who owns all this?

MORGAN

We do.

They reach the end of the catwalk. He pauses in front of another door.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Jensen Pharmaceuticals.

(a familiar riff)

...A third of all the drugs you get in a pharmacy contain some form of rain forest materials. But less than ten percent of the plants in the rain forest have even been analyzed. Where we're headed, that number is almost zero.

CARRIE

(beat)

And where are you headed.

MORGAN

(smiles/cryptic)

That way.

He motions with his head, then reaches down and opens the door.

INT. LAB. DAY.

MORGAN

This is Walter Geller.

A man in a lab coat turns and looks at them. They are standing in a gleamingly bright science LAB that could easily be the heart of a research facility. There are dozens of complex instruments scattered about the room: a spectrometer... an electron microscope... a large centrifuge...

WALTER
(turning)
Hello.

Walter is sweet, amiable and balding. Despite the white coat, he could easily be an accountant.

MORGAN
Walter is our research scientist.

WALTER
Galley slave. Everyone else gets a window. Do I get a window?

MORGAN
Walter--you are our window.

WALTER
See what a charming guy? That's how I got here.

JOHN
Nice lab.

WALTER
Except for the window thing.

MORGAN
Walter what was that cancer statistic, again? What? Eighty five percent...

WALTER
No--you screwed it up. Of the four thousand plants known to have cancer fighting properties, eighty-five percent live in the Amazon basin

CARRIE
So you're fighting cancer?

MORGAN
Well--no.
(another smile)
We've got bigger fish.

There's a beat...

WALTER
Speaking of which...
(crosses to the counter)
(MORE)

WALTER (cont'd)

Have you ever seen actually seen a
piranha. We netted this one this
morning.

He opens the sliding door on a large cabinet revealing several
glass cases. One is filled with water and has a piranha
swimming inside it.

INSERT CASE

He faces out toward the light. The jaws are formidable and
live up to the reputation.

JOHN (O.S.)

What's over here?

DIFFERENT ANGLE

John has moved to another cabinet and is staring at it
intently. Inside is a bright yellow frog with red bands on
the back.

WALTER

Poison dart frog. That's the deadliest
venom in the world

(beat)

If you even graze the skin you'll be
dead in ten minutes.

John stares at it, mesmerized.

WALTER

It's a great place to visit but it's
nice to be in here.

(beat)

It's a lot more comfortable.

MORGAN

(gracious smile)

And there's nothing wrong with being
comfortable.

CUT TO:

THE LOUNGE...

There are plush arm chairs and huge pillows on the floor. A
massive screen descends from the ceiling at the touch of a
button.

MORGAN

A screening room...

INT. KITCHEN

It's large and spotless with several different work-stations.
There is a wood burning grill and a large marble pastry slab.
A Frenchman with long blonde dreadlocks is preparing a fruit
tart.

MORGAN
Full restaurant kitchen....

OLIVIER
(the chef)
Bonjour...

THE DINING ROOM.

MORGAN
And this is my favorite....

It's huge and opulent. The table goes on forever. The walls are solid mahogany. Along the length of the room, is a massive painting by Rousseau. It's a jungle scene with a panther skulking through the bush. There is crystal and china set with fine linen at every place for thirty.

JOHN
Wow.

MORGAN
It might seem indulgent but it's really kind of necessary. By your fourth month away "creature comforts" become a necessity.

CARRIE
(taking it in)
Creature comforts....

JOHN
Where's the squash court?

MORGAN
(smiles)
Well--we don't have one of those but...

He pauses, saving the best for last....

INT. OBSERVATION DECK. DUSK.

It's a huge glass dome at the top of the ship, similar to the observation car on a train. The jungle glides by out the "window" with an unobstructed view in 360 degrees. The room itself is outfitted like a lounge, with deep soft chairs facing out toward the river. A long bar sits in the corner with booze and serve yourself hors d'oeuvres.

CARRIE
(struck by the view)
It's beautiful.

MORGAN
And there's no humidity. No bugs. No heat.

(MORE)

MORGAN (cont'd)
It's the best way to see the jungle:
you can have it but it can't have you.

Carrie comes back "inside."

CARRIE
Nice to smell it once in a while.
After it rains...

MORGAN
True.
(beat)
That's the problem with science...
Kills the romantic in us.

He fixes her with a gaze. She glances away...

MORGAN
Why don't you guys relax and have a
drink. Dinner is at seven thirty--you
know where the dining room is. Come
down just like that. You both look
terrific.

She fights a slight smile. He starts to leave then turns
back...

MORGAN
And by the way, Carrie. The work you
did with RFDI was amazing. I still
have your paper on reforestation.

She watches Morgan disappear down the stairs.... They stand
stunned for a beat then glance at each other. Quite a
morning. Carrie looks over at the plate of hors d'oeuvres on
the coffee table.

CARRIE
Told ya we'd be okay.

JOHN
'Cause you knew James Bond was coming?

CARRIE
'Cause it's not really all that scary.

JOHN
It is to them.

Standoff. Quiet for a beat.

JOHN
You look like you're getting tired.

CARRIE
I'm fine.

JOHN
I said you look like you're getting
tired.

MAN'S VOICE (OS)
BUGGER!

WIDER

They turn to see a slightly disheveled Aussie standing at the bar. In sharp contrast to Morgan he wears rumpled khaki and an old Patagonia shirt. There is a large (and fresh) spot of red wine on the front.

ANDREW
Bloody-fucking-brilliant
(seeing them)
Oh--sorry. Just spilled a thousand
dollars on my shirt.
(beat)
Neither of you are piranha are you.

CARRIE
(beat... smiles)
Um... I think they only go after blood.

ANDREW
Oh no. Fancy expedition like this has
special piranha.

He walks forward.

ANDREW
How do you do. I'm Andrew Simms. With
the University.

JOHN
University?

ANDREW
Didn't tell you about us, hunh?

They hesitate.

ANDREW
(dabbing at the stain)
Never does. Let me guess... Told you
he owned the boat, Jensen
Pharmaceuticals...

CARRIE
Uh--yeah...

ANDREW
Well he owns half of it. We own the
other half.
(re: shirt)
What do you think? Club soda?

CARRIE
Um... And salt.

ANDREW
Oh--right, salt.

JOHN
Who's we?

ANDREW
Hunh? Oh--Johns Hopkins.

JOHN
(impressed)
Really?

ANDREW (CONT'D)
(looks up--)
It's a public private partnership.
Dirty little secret of research is that
an endowed university has more cash to
spend than a private company, because
we don't need to get it back. Going
where we're going, gets pretty
expensive.

JOHN
And where are you going?

ANDREW
Oh, way up. Thousand miles past
Iquitos.
(beat)
Where are you going?

JOHN
...Iquitos.

ANDREW
Right. Heard you had quite a night.

JOHN
It was loud.

ANDREW
You're lucky. Tight as a drum in here.
All I heard was my "simulated wave
machine."

JOHN
Sounds like you were the lucky one.

ANDREW
Oh, I don't know. Who wouldn't want to
hear rain on the roof?

CLOSE UP. CARRIE

She staring at him. Andrew turns and catches her staring. She looks away and John sees her look away. Andrew sees John see her look away.... It's a mess.

ANDREW

Well--I'm gonna go find some salt. My luck they'll have imported saffron and no table salt.

JOHN

(smoothly)
Well--they'll definitely have imported saffron.

Andrew looks. Nods...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT

It could be the Queen Mary or the Titanic. Except for the absence of white tie, this is a banquet from the Golden Age of travel...

WALTER

Wow, this is delicious. What's in it?

MORGAN

I think it's the saffron.

WIDER. ROOM.

It's the full cast of characters from before plus a dozen more. The whole thing is very egalitarian: the crew from the engine room mix with Morgan and his scientists. Andrew sits near the end in a brand new shirt. His assistant sits next to him: a young woman with chopped bleached hair and a bunch of piercings. Across from them sits Wayne, the "divemaster". He looks like a refugee from a surf movie with blond hair past his shoulders and permanently tanned skin. John and Carrie sit near the middle.

OLIVIER

(from the doorway--thick french accent)

No saffron. It is the cumin.

Everyone turns.

MORGAN

Oh. Olivier! Bravo.

Everyone APPLAUDS.

OLIVIER

I did not make it. It was Isabelle.

He pulls his assistant out from the kitchen to another round of APPLAUSE. It's a very nice dinner party for the middle of the jungle.

MORGAN

And one more thing. I'd like to propose a toast to our new guests. John and Carrie will be traveling with us up to Iquitos and I want you to be very nice to them because if the research doesn't work out we may need to start giving tours.

Laughter..

MORGAN

Carrie used to do rain forest research and John is a celebrated psychiatrist from Cornell...

JOHN

(shocked/flattered)
How'd you know that?

MORGAN

(shrugs)
The internet.
(beat)
Anyhow--lets all raise a glass... TO OUR NEW GUESTS.

EVERYONE

Our guests... TO our guests...our new guests....

Much clinking. More drinking. After a beat....

ANDREW

Why just Iquitos?

CARRIE

(turning)
What?

ANDREW

(a little hammered)
Well why don't you stay? We've got plenty of room and as far as I can tell we're not gonna run out of wine. Plus you used to do this kind of research....

MORGAN

Andrew, I'm sure these people have busy lives. We're the only ones who have the time to go traipsing around the middle of the jungle for...

ANDREW

Oh, come on mate... They're not gonna spill the spill the beans. You could get em to sign a non-disclosure...

(turns to Carrie)

Morgan is very hush hush about his brand new pills.

("cluing" them in)

Mucho dinero.

JOHN

Well, we really couldn't....

ANDREW

Anyhow you could stay on my side of the boat. Just stick to the starboard rail.

MORGAN

Andrew, I'd love to have them stay. It's just a difficult thing to commit to. Once we go past Iquitos there's no turning around and they'd have to be with us for the the duration.

(to Carrie)

It's pretty primitive up there.

ANDREW

(raising his crystal wine glass)

A world of hardship.

MORGAN

(tightly)

Well it's two thousand miles up river. You'd be going to a place...

ANDREW

...That almost no one gets to see. Ever... Ever.

(pause)

It's a chance to go to the moon.

The place goes quiet for a beat.

CARRIE

Sounds amazing.

JOHN

Well--we'd have to think about it.

ANDREW

Sure. It's a nice thing to think about.

INT. CABIN. NIGHT.

They are locked in mid conversation...

CARRIE

I don't understand. What's there to think about?

JOHN

We were only going to go for a couple of weeks.

CARRIE

So we'll go for four. This is what you wanted, John. There's a jacuzzi in the bathroom...

JOHN

I've got patients, Carrie.

CARRIE

And they'll be fine.

JOHN

(breath)

You heard what he said. It's primitive up there.

CARRIE

Well it's not primitive in here.

(imploing him to join her)

C'mon, John. It sounds amazing. What did he say? Like going to the moon.

JOHN

And you trust him?

CARRIE

(confused)

...What?

JOHN

You trust that guy?

CARRIE

Well... I don't know him.

JOHN

I know you don't. Neither do I.

Her head swims for a beat. What's the point?

JOHN (CONT'D)

Did you take your pill?

CARRIE

Um--no. Not yet.

JOHN

Don't you think you should?

CARRIE

I will.

(deep breath. Trying to
stay focused)
I want to see this, John. I want to
see the jungle. And I want to know why
you don't want me to.

He looks at her for a beat...

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK. THE NEXT MORNING.

Several of them watch the town of Iquitos recede in the distance. It's a teeming river port, smaller than Manaus but still bustling with commerce: docks cranes, trucks, riverboats laden with cargo. As it gets smaller in the distance all the detail starts to blur together becoming one last smudge of modern life against the jungle.

MORGAN

Well, say goodbye to civilization.
Anyone need anything? Toothpaste?
Beer? Cigarettes. We can always send
the dinghy.

WAYNE

(the "dive master")
I'd like a quarter pounder and a
strawberry shake.

JOHN

(tightly)
So would I.

ANGLE. CARRIE.

She glances over at John then looks toward the bow.

LONG SHOT. AMAZON. FROM THE BOW.

It has narrowed slightly and there is a strange new feeling heading toward uncharted waters with no civilization left. Off in the distance the river makes a long slow bend toward the right--turning toward infinity.

SHOT. CARRIE

She watches from the bow, soaking it in: something she imagined that she finally gets to see. There's a voice to her left.

MORGAN

Pretty special, isn't it?

CARRIE

Very.

MORGAN

You know he's right. Besides outer space this is the last frontier left.

He moves a little closer to her. She keeps looking over the front.

MORGAN

Here. I'll show you something really special.

(glancing over the front)
See those blades built into the bow?
That's a diamond saw. It can cut through any root or tree that gets in our way. It can shred a mangrove like that.

He snaps his fingers and Carrie turns. Hold a beat...

CARRIE

Then what do you do with it?

They share a look and she heads back toward the stern, leaving him at the bow

EXT. DIVE DECK.

It's the lower deck near the rear of the vessel. A small two man sub is tied down to the teak. John is talking to a young man in "resort" clothes and expensive sun glasses. Peter Clark is Morgan's right hand man. He has a tan.

PETER

Oh no. This is still the main river. We won't get to the tributary for a couple of days.

(beat)
You'll know it when you see it.

JOHN

How? 'Cause it's smaller?

PETER

(smiles)
'Cause it's darker.

He puts on his sun glasses and heads up the deck

SERIES OF SHOTS. UP RIVER. TIME LAPSE...

Over the next few days, the river narrows. The sun rises and sets on the Amazon as THE IMAGE DISSOLVES from a mile wide, to half a mile, to a normal river, to a dense piece of jungle.

SERIES OF SHOTS. TELEPHOTO. THE JUNGLE.

The character has changed as well. The foliage becomes more dense and definitely more strange.

There are orchids the size of a basketball and lily pads the length of a pool table. The animals are no more "normal": lizards that glide from tree to tree on membrane-like wings...five inch ants and one foot beetles. The baby birds have claws. The eagles have the head of an owl. The snakes are thirty feet long. The moths are over a foot.

SHOT. DAEDALUS.

It slows almost to a stop in the middle of the river and begins a long, slow, creeping turn to the right. The captain actually leans out of a doorway on the bridge (breaking the bio-static seal) and barks orders to several deckhands scurrying about the rails. As the ship begins to turn into the tributary, it gets literally swallowed in the jungle. The tree canopy envelopes the top deck and Don has to thrust and reverse several times, just to negotiate the turn. It's like a Humvee trying to make a compact parking space.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

They watch, rapt, from their comfortable lounge chairs as the rain forest consumes the boat. Branches from the jungle glide by inches from the glass sending howler monkeys, sloths and parrots scurrying for cover. You could reach out and touch them. It's like being in a submarine.

MORGAN

Who wants a drink?

WIDER.

Almost everyone is there. Andrew. Morgan. His sidekick Pete. Wayne the dive-master. Even Walter, freed from the rabbit warren of his science lab. John and Carrie are glued to a window. It's a party atmosphere and still--it's a little tense.

ANDREW

Anaconda.

They turn to see a thirty foot snake slither off a low lying tree limb and glide into the water. He transforms into a sea serpent, gracefully disappearing below the surface.

JOHN

It's black.

ANDREW

What?

JOHN

The water. It's not dark. It's black.

ANDREW

Actually, it's not the water that's black. It's the sediment on the bottom. The water is clear.

(MORE)

ANDREW (cont'd)
There's a local algae that turns the
bottom that color.

PETER
Pretty valuable algae.

WALTER
Let's hope.

MORGAN
Let's talk about it later.

John looks over at them.

CUT TO:

INT. "NAV. ROOM" LATER...

It's dark and subdued like a recording studio. There are no windows and the only illumination is the soft light from dozens of computer monitors. On the far wall, a huge flat screen display displays a map of the area with a blinking red cursor for the location of the boat.

DON
Okay we were here....

JOHN
Right....

DON
And we're going all the way up here...

He moves the blinking arrow into uncharted waters.

JOHN
So why does it stop?

DON
What?

JOHN
The map. It stops. Why does it stop.

DON
Well--it hasn't been mapped yet.
(beat)
I mean we know where we are. We just
don't exactly know what's up there.

JOHN
That's reassuring.

DON
Look that's why we built this thing.
It isn't all just a toy. The whole
ship is computerized. New York knows
where we are every second of every day.

(MORE)

DON (cont'd)

" They could sail this thing from
Manhattan if they wanted to.

John nods....

DON

There's nothing we haven't prepared
for.

CUT TO:

THE BLACK LAGOON.

Peaceful. Calm. The water is still and literally jet black. Unlike the rest of the river there is only a slight trace of current. Suddenly a ripple appears in the foreground. A fish. Another snake? Maybe a caiman or an alligator? The ripples dissipate for a beat when the stillness is suddenly broken by the screaming SOUND of a chain saw.

SHOT. DAEDALUS' BOW

The diamond saw rips through a mangrove root like it is balsa wood. Splinters fly everywhere. The thing has awesome power. Once the tree has been eviscerated the saw slows down and the ship moves forward a few feet. The saw starts up again and they begin pulverizing another one....

WIDER. BLACK LAGOON.

The colors are beautiful: green, gray, blue, black with an occasional hit of red or yellow from an orchid or parrot. Suddenly, the gleaming steel of the Daedalus begins plowing through the wall of foliage (saw blaring) changing the palette dramatically. The mangrove branches snap and crackle under its force.

SHOT. FOREDECK

A huge CHEER goes up from an assembled crowd as the ship forces its way into the clearing of the lagoon. It's still a tight fit with the jungle looming on either side, but it's a lagoon nonetheless. Champagne is popped. The saw slows down. Rock and Roll starts screaming from a loudspeaker on the Bridge Deck....

CUT TO:

A JET SKI

As it rips through the lagoon with Wayne in the drivers seat. The CAMERA WIDENS to reveal one of the crew members being dragged behind the machine on a tow line attached to an inner tube. Wayne executes a sharp turn and barely manages to avoid putting the tube into the thick forest of mangroves.

FULL SHOT. ANCHOR

It drops from its mooring hitting the water with a splash.
They are here to stay.

SHOT. TRER LINE

Just as the anchor drops, a satellite dish pushes up through the canopy, on a long telescoping pole. The dish opens up, "blooming" like a weird metallic flower. It rotates, looking for home.

INT. CABIN.

Morgan boots up his computer, going online.

INT. JOHN'S AND CARRIE'S CABIN.

He does the same. John settles back in his chair with a weird look of comfort as he connects to AOL...

EXT. TOP DECK.

Carrie climbs the ladder that leads to the exterior top deck, to get a better view of the jungle.

ANDREW (O.S.)

BUGGER!

She hesitates then keeps climbing the ladder, further. Carrie ascends to the top deck where Andrew is scurrying around on all fours across a huge piece of orange silk that looks like a parachute.

ANDREW

Murphy's-bloody-fucking-law.

She moves forward a few feet.

CARRIE

What?

ANDREW

(beat)

If they give you three hundred bolts, and one container, the odds of spilling that container are MATHEMATICALLY a hundred percent.

She laughs.

ANDREW

Right--funny for you. You're not trying to build a blimp with a bloody biology degree.

CARRIE

Why are you building a blimp?

ANGLE. MAIN DECK.

John stands beside Andrews assistant (Chloe) on the main deck of the boat looking up at the bright orange blimp (now inflated). It glows in the sunlight, bright orange against the green of the jungle. The girls back and shoulders are covered in "tribal" tattoos.

CHLOE
It's like a big tree house. We can hover right over the canopy without hurting a leaf.

He looks at it, glances back at her.

JOHN
He flies it?

CHLOE
He built it.

JOHN
(quieter)
Pretty impressive.

He turns back to her. Stares at her body.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(re: the tattoos)
Did those hurt?

CHLOE
Only the first one..

EXT. TOP DECK.

She stands beside Andrew next to the gondola of the blimp. It looks like the weird hybrid of a tiny sports car and some lawn furniture. The cockpit is cobbled together with PVC piping and there is a lawn mower engine on the back. The seats are beach chair configured side by side. Each has a stick and rudder. It's tethered to the deck with sand bags.

CARRIE
No, I can't.

ANDREW
There's room for two.

CARRIE
Yeah. I know but...

ANDREW
Scared of heights?

CARRIE
What? Just heights? I wish.

ANDREW
(very Aussie)
Aw, I don't believe that... You don't
strike me as the scared type.

CARRIE
(beat)
'I don't?

ANDREW
Not really.

JOHN (OS)
Go ahead.

WIDER

They turn to see him standing at the top of the ladder.
Carrie freezes for a moment: caught doing nothing.

CARRIE
Oh. Hi.

JOHN
(granting "permission").
It's alright. Go take a ride. It's
safe right?

ANDREW
Very.

She looks at him a little confused...

JOHN
Go on.

EXT. DIVE DECK.

Wayne at the "swim board" of the boat in full dive gear. He
holds a spear gun in one hand and a long string of freshly
speared fish in the other. Olivier stands above him arguing
about the catch.

OLIVIER
No. I cannot cook zeas. I need ze red
one.

WAYNE
Dude. It's a freakin' lagoon. It's
not a supermarket.

OLIVIER
I need ze Rouget. It grows here, no?

WAYNE
How should I know?

OLIVIER

You must go deeper. Into ze rocks.

Wayne shakes his head and pulls his mask back down over his face. He tosses the string of fish to Olivier and falls backwards with a SPLASH, sinking below the surface, as....

THE BLIMP

...Rises gently above the tree canopy. It glides up into the sunlight, silently, effortlessly as thousands of miles of jungle open up to the horizon.

CARRIE

Oh my God...

CLOSER.

They sit side by side in their "lawn chairs." The motor behind them is actually electric so the whole experience is strangely silent. As they get higher above canopy, all the noises of the jungle blend together into a weird, wonderful cacophony. There's a hot wind in their face.

ANDREW

Look at that. That's an epiphyte forest. None of that is even a tree. That's all parasitic vine.

CARRIE

Why does it grow in a clump like that?

ANDREW

I'm not sure..

(beat)

Let's take a look.

AERIAL BLIMP

He pulls the stick to the left and they gently start to float over to the stand of "trees" they pointed to. It's effortless and easy, like a dream you'd have about flying instead of the real thing.

CARRIE

Wow.

They drift for a beat.

CARRIE

Look at that. Dragon's Blood.

ANDREW

Sorry?

CARRIE
Oh--what do you call it...
(searches her memory)
Croton... Croton....

ANDREW
Croton, Lecheri... Very nice.

CARRIE
I used to raise money off that tree.

ANDREW
How's that?

CARRIE
You know--star of the rain forest.
Anti bacterial. Antioxidant. The sap
has anti-viral properties.

ANDREW
So, you want to fly?

CARRIE
(beat)
...You serious?

ANDREW
Well, sure. It's a balloon. You can't
crash the thing.

CLOSER

Carrie reaches out and takes the stick in her hand. It's a little hesitant at first, then she starts to get comfortable and takes control of the aircraft. Carrie leans to the right and the huge blimp responds, turning slowly into the sun.

CARRIE
(quietly)
God.

ANDREW
If you push down it'll descend. If you
want to go higher you just...

But she already has. Carrie pulls back on the stick and huge balloon starts to float up above jungle.

ANDREW
So where do you want to go?

CARRIE
(turns/beat)
Well, that's a good question.

WIDER. BLIMP.

It stands out like a bright orange ball against the sky.

CUT TO:

UNDERWATER.

It's dark and deep. Much deeper than one would expect from the narrow tributary. Wayne descends into a small rock canyon with his spear gun in one hand and a flashlight in the other.

DIFFERENT ANGLE. A STRANGE POV

Through the river grasses and plant life, the beam of Wayne's light flashes toward the CAMERA and then away. Whatever this POV is, it ducks a little lower behind the wavy plants as the light shines toward it then drops lower into the gorge....

EXT. SKY. BLIMP.

Carrie has descended to just above the canopy. They glide past the tree tops scattering an occasional flock of birds. A gibbon glides by on a branch. The blimp brushes the leaves.

CARRIE

How low can I take it?

ANDREW

As low as you want. That's what it's for.

She descends, brushing the tree tops.

CARRIE

Wow. Like you could pick the flowers.

ANDREW

Yeah. Or the beetles or the leaves or a lizard or two. When we build the tree station we put the netting right on top of the...

(stops)

Hang on... What's that.

CARRIE

What?

ANDREW

Over there.

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

Andrew points out toward a sharp change in color at the top of the canopy.

CARRIE

What is it?

ANDREW

I don't know. I mean--I ought to know
and I don't know.

SHOT. APPROACHING BLIMP. (FROM THE 'NEW' AREA)

The foliage is a purplish mauve, almost eggplant color. The leaves seem larger than the rest of the canopy, almost six inches in diameter and shiny. The Blimp grows into the FOREGROUND OF THE SHOT....

ANDREW

(flying it)

See that. That waxy stuff? That's all new growth.

CARRIE

Yeah...

ANDREW

Well it's not the growing season.

Andrew takes out a pair of clippers.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(clipping a branch)

Never seen this tree before.

He takes the "sample" and drops it into a zip lock bag. Andrew stares at it for a beat...

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Hell of a place.

CUT TO:

DEEPER UNDERWATER....

Wayne descends into the depths of the "canyon" shining his light. When he gets near the bottom he points the beam into a crevice and suddenly stops.

REVERSE ANGLE.

An old dredging machine used in gold mining has sunk to the bottom of the lagoon. Wayne examines it for a moment, curiously, shining his light through the rusted metal.

CLOSER

It looks like it has been there for a while. Wayne gets closer still and then... WHOOSH! A school of small triggerfish explodes from a hiding place darting by his light. Wayne jerks back gripping onto the spear-gun. After a moment, he gathers himself and turns from the dredger, diving deeper into the canyon.

MOVING WITH HIM....

He searches through the rock gorge looking for dinner. The fish likes to "hold" in holes and crevices so Wayne pokes around each one. He grabs a clump of sea grass attached to a rock and pulls it away revealing a hole but no fish. Wayne moves a little deeper and sees another promising rock.

"DIFFERENT POV."

The CAMERA "swims" through the seagrass following Wayne's stream of bubbles. Slowly, fluidly it begins to descend with him into a tight crevice of rocks. All the luminescence starts to disappear as the CAMERA follows him deeper and deeper into the gorge. It moves through the stream of bubbles getting closer and closer to his descending body.

CLOSER STILL.

IT moves past his fins, right up to the back of Wayne's neck. He feels something touch his shoulder and whirls around, terrified, shining his torch, right into the lens...

REVERSE ANGLE. WAYNE'S POV

It's another diver. Chloe (Andrew's assistant) greets him with a wave and a Hawaiian "chaka" sign with her thumb and pinky....

SURFACE.

They clutch onto the swim board.

CHLOE
(pulling off her mask)
It's awesome down there!

WAYNE
You scared the shit out of me.

CHLOE
I didn't know it was that deep.

WAYNE
You shouldn't take any gear without asking me. And you shouldn't dive alone.

CHLOE
Dude. This is my gear. And I've been diving alone since I was twelve.

Pause... Really?

CHLOE
So what's down there?

WAYNE
(shrugs)
Nothing.

BUT...

UNDERWATER POV...

Something stares up at the two pairs of fins next to the boat, dangling, temptingly down into the water...

CUT TO:

FISH GUTS

Being ripped from the body of a local catfish.

WIDER. EXT. MAIN DECK. DUSK

Olivier stands at the railing, cleaning the fish on a long white board that extends over the water. The huge haul of speared fish sits at his side, joined together on a long line of rope run through their gills.

CLOSER

He's happy as he works. Olivier whistles to himself with a cigarette dangling out of his mouth. He finishes one fillet, rinses it in water, then puts it in a small tupperware container at his feet. Olivier grabs the next fish then suddenly SCREAMS.

OLIVIER
Il bouge! Il bouge. Merde! Il peut souffrir!

WIDER.

Wayne comes running up the dive deck.

WAYNE
What's wrong?

OLIVIER
Regardez ça! This fish. It is breathing.

Wayne moves closer.

POV FISH

It is dark green with HUGE scales the size of guitar picks. Olivier pins it to the cutting board but sure enough, the abdomen is moving up and down like the fish has lungs.

WAYNE
But I speared it.

OLIVIER

I know but look. There is no spear.

He turns the fish over and sure enough there is no mark.
Whatever wound he inflicted on the animal is gone.

WAYNE

Holy shit.

The fish starts breathing heavier and heavier and then suddenly, in one jerky movement, slaps his tail and flips off the cutting board, over the side of the boat and into the water. They watch it disappear into the black lagoon.

WIDER:

Wayne and Olivier just look at each other and then down to the long string of fish at their side...

CUT TO:

A FISH

This time beautifully prepared with a white wine sauce and paper thin slices of lemon. The head is still on but it is elegantly garnished with parsley and fresh herbs.

WIDER

There is applause for the food but it's a little more tepid this time. They're going to be eating fish for a while.

SHOT. ANDREW (LONG LENS).

He's engaged in animated conversation at one end of the table.

SHOT. CARRIE.

She's watching him.

SHOT. JOHN.

He's watching her.

SHOT. MORGAN.

He's watching the whole thing.

CLOSER. ANDREW.

He's talking to Walter.

ANDREW

So, it's not an epiphyte or a bromeliad
'cause there's no fixated carbon.

(MORE)

ANDREW (cont'd)
I'd never seen bark like that in my life so I thought, maybe it's a new species of calycophylum cause the bark changes color.

WALTER
Sure.

ANDREW
Only there's no broad leaves. No flowers. Only reason to say that is cause I can't figure out what it is and they'd throw me out of school for that.

WALTER
Well I'm keeping light on it like you asked.

ANDREW
And keep it humid. Like 90, 93 percent.

WALTER
Already is.

ANDREW
Good. Then we'll do some PCR and a spectral analysis on the DNA...

MORGAN (OS
(overhearing/3 seats away)
Sure, Andrew. We'll do that for you.

WIDER

Andrew turns...

ANDREW
I do own half the lab.

MORGAN
But none of the scientist.

ANDREW
(beat)
You hear that Walter? He just said he "owns" you.

WALTER
(resigned)
He does.

There's a laugh.

ANDREW
Walter, Walter... You must first break free from the chains in your mind....

Another ripple of laughter. This is entertainment in the jungle. Andrew smiles at the jousting, glances up the table.

HIS POV

He catches Carrie staring at him. Their eyes lock for a beat when... CLANG...

WIDER

There is a huge banging noise on the hull of boat. Everyone freezes, motionless for a beat...

CLANG... CLANG... CLANG...

IT keeps on going, loudly, rhythmically like someone banging on a metal door...

DON

What the hell is that?

He leaps from the table and bolts from the dining room. The CLANGING keeps going.

PETER

Is that the engine room

MORGAN

No. It's coming from the bow.

Then all of a sudden it stops. Everyone sits motionless at the long banquet table staring out the "window" at "Times Square." They wait for the next bang but it doesn't come. Like a missing number in a sequence...

CUT TO:

BANG, BANG, BANG....

But this time it's a headboard. Bang... Bang... Bang.... Hard, angry, aggressive... It crescendos then ends in a long collapsed exhale.

CLOSE UP. CARRIE

She's under him. Looking at the ceiling of her cabin. Uncomfortable. The whole thing was strange... hostile.

John rolls off of her. They lay for a beat when he turns and eyes her suspiciously even though they just made love.

INT. BRIDGE. LATE AT NIGHT...

Morgan, Peter, Walter and Don the captain stand huddled in a corner, speaking softly out of the helmsman's earshot.

DON

I checked the whole boat. Nothing. I sent Wayne over the side. There's just some long scratches in the paint-- like somebody keyed the car.

MORGAN

A log?

DON

Pretty loud log. And it was below the water line. Whatever that was, it wasn't floating.

MORGAN

(turning to Walter)

Did Wayne get the algae samples?

WALTER

Yeah.

MORGAN

And?

WALTER

We won't know till we grow them.

MORGAN

(nervous)

Terrific.

WALTER

Look the old stuff grew four times faster than human stem cells and if anything this stuff looks richer.

MORGAN

When'll we know?

WALTER

Hopefully soon. Stuff around here grows pretty fast.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP. ANDREW'S PLANT. IN THE LAB. TIME LAPSE.

Pretty fast indeed. Instead of just staying "fresh" like a cut flower, this thing continues to grow. Over the next twenty four hours it starts to regenerate in front of our eyes. First a shoot, then a leaf, then a brand new branch. growing backwards trying to replace the one that is missing. It's one thing for a tree to replace a leaf-- but for a leaf to replace a tree?

WALTER (O.S.)

Holy shit.

INT. CORRIDOR

Walter walks quickly with Peter and Morgan toward the lab.

MORGAN
Does he know yet?

WALTER
I don't think so.

MORGAN
Where did he find it?

WALTER
I'm not sure.

MORGAN
So we'll need him.

WALTER
The girl was with him. She may know where it is.

MORGAN
And you're sure of this.

WALTER
The thing is growing backwards, Morgan. That means it has the ability to regenerate itself. To regenerate parts of the plant that are missing--it remembers. Forget about the algae. That's what human stem cells do.

MORGAN
(deep breath)
Right....

WALTER
The only question is whether it can....

They open the door to THE LAB and suddenly freeze.

REVERSE ANGLE. LAB

Andrew stands at the counter looking down at his sample. He seems just as stunned. He turns and looks at this posse standing in the doorway.

INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE. LATER.

It is high tech and chic but it could also be anywhere. Madison Avenue or the middle of the jungle. All four of them are grouped around the "sitting area"

ANDREW
Absolutely not.

MORGAN

I think you're being a little shortsighted.

ANDREW

You mean ethical.

MORGAN

Ethics and poverty aren't always the same thing.

ANDREW

I'm not poor, Morgan. I own my own flat.

MORGAN

Look, you could share in the patent. Do you know what that means? Do you know how much money that's worth? Giving something like this away to a University is...

ANDREW

I know. Crazy! Offering scientific discovery up to the world... Sharing it with my colleagues.. For free. I must be out of my mind.

MORGAN

Well right now there's no knowledge to share. We haven't done a DNA analysis, have we, Walter?

ANDREW

(getting pissed off)

I own that plant.

MORGAN

Oh-- you're starting to sound like us.

ANDREW

That's part of my research. It belongs to Johns Hopkins...

MORGAN

Have you ever heard the phrase "Law of the Jungle."

ANDREW

I e-mailed them already.

This stops them. Morgan gathers himself.

MORGAN

Well, we can always talk about this later, can't we.

ANDREW

Right. let's talk about it later.
Cheer-e-o mate.

He shoots a look and starts for the door when it suddenly swings open in front of him.

DON

(entering)

I think you better see this.

CUT TO:

THE STERN.

A crowd of people is standing by the back of the boat where the freshly sawed mangrove trees have now grown over the stern. In twenty four hours the roots have reformed around the rear of the boat, sealing off the entrance to the lagoon entirely. The body of water itself is too narrow to turn the boat around. They appear to be stuck.

DON

There's only a saw on the front.

They look at the jungle, eating their boat.

DON

All that stuff grew overnight. It's covered the whole stern, but we only have a saw on the front.

JOHN

(worried)

Why is that?

ANDREW

They only thought they'd have to go forward.

CARRIE

How "Western."

JOHN

You're saying we're stuck?

DON

You'll need a chain saw to get through it.

(beat)

The lagoon is too narrow to turn around and there's no way I could push through those mangroves in reverse...

JOHN

So what? We're trapped here?

MORGAN

Relax doctor.

JOHN

No. He's saying...

DON

Look, I didn't build the thing. I just sail it. I called Manaus for help and they're sending a team of guys, but it'll take at least five days.

MORGAN

(suddenly)

That's fine.

Everyone freezes--turns...

MORGAN

Really it's fine.

(pushed a smile)

It's great.

(beat)

We were going to stay here a week anyway and in the meantime, we're the most comfortable people on the Amazon. Between this boat and the jungle I'll take this boat every time.

A bigger smile. No one moves....

STRANGE POV: THE BOAT.

Only this time the POV is from the land. Whatever is watching them, it can also climb out of the water....

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT. COMPUTER SCREEN.

SEARCH. SEAPLANE. CHARTER. MANAUS BRAZIL

The arrow clicks the "SEARCH" button. A screenful of hits come up, mainly in Portuguese.

CARRIE

That's insane.

INT. CABIN.

The list of seaplanes glows on the computer screen

JOHN

Is it? We can get the dinghy through those mangroves. Then we get down to the end of the tributary. They can land a plane on the main river...

CARRIE
And that's safer than staying here?

JOHN
Shorter.

CARRIE
Look, this is...

JOHN
Stupid?

He raises his voice. Carrie recoils slightly. He pulls it back in a little.

JOHN
You're right. This is dangerous and impulsive and stupid....

CARRIE
It wasn't impulsive.

JOHN
(not hearing her)
...This whole thing is completely irresponsible.

CARRIE
(clear/quiet)
I've waited ten years to do this.

JOHN
Right. Because you had a serious condition...

CARRIE
I had a lot of them.

JOHN
What does that mean?

CARRIE
Nothing.

JOHN
No cmon. What does that mean?

CARRIE
(crossing)
It doesn't mean anything John, alright.

He blocks her at the foot of the bed.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

John moves slightly to the right. She pushes past him...

EXT. MAIN DECK. LATER.

Carrie stands outside near the stern looking at the jungle. Andrew passes her with Chloe at his side carrying coils of climbing rope.

ANDREW

Cmon. We're going to set up the tree station.

CARRIE

(turns/bit of a daze)

Hunh?

ANDREW

We're goin' to climb trees. Cmon, I'll teach ya.

CARRIE

Oh. I can't.

ANDREW

It's fun.

CHLOE

It's awesome.

CARRIE

(deflated)

Really. I can't.

Andrew scans her for a beat. A scientist gathering new data. Carrie flashes him a weak smile-- almost an apology. He heads down the ladder to the dinghy....

CLOSE UP. CARRIE

She watches him go....

JUMP CUT TO:

LATER...

She stands at the window of the Observation Deck staring out at the jungle. A few of the vines have started to overgrow the boat and they brush up against the glass itself. Carrie looks right through that into the depths of the rain forest.

HER POV

The camera PUSHES slowly through the tight seal of the domed window into the jungle itself. As it passes the barrier, all the sounds begin emerge in that weird symphony: birds, gibbons, bugs, wind, the constant rustling of the bush.

As her POV grows deeper into the jungle, the sounds get louder, just imagining what lies beyond....

CUT TO:

A HUMAN FIGURE

Swinging through the jungle on the edge of a vine. Only it's not a vine at all-- just a well placed climbing rope and instead of Tarzan, it's a research scientist from John Hopkins University.

ANDREW

Wa-haaaaaa!

He sails from tree to tree, flying through the understory and landing (crashing?) into a predetermined limb. Chloe is waiting there with a clenched fist of congratulations.

CHLOE

Dude!

ANDREW

I know. It was great.

They glance out across the jungle.

ANDREW

So what's next?

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

Carrie is staring but this time it's not at the jungle.

HER POV

John sits in one of the lounge chair reading Forbes. A parrot drifts by the window right behind his head. He turns the page.

SHOT. MAIN DECK.

She strides down exterior deck toward the dive platform in the back. Carrie wears a bathing suit and a sarong.

JOHN

(emerging from a door/following her)

Where are you going?

CARRIE

(not turning)

Swimming

JOHN

Carrie!

She keeps going

NEW ANGLE. DIVE DECK

Carrie descends the small ladder that leads to the dive deck in the back.

JOHN

Carrie come back here.

She heads toward the second ladder that leads to the swim platform.

JOHN

Carrie this is ridiculous.

CARRIE

(turns/controlled)

It's not ridiculous, John. I'm going swimming. Next to the boat. The water is eighty degrees. It's basically a bathtub.

JOHN

You don't know what's down there.

CARRIE

(seizing the metaphor/ more softly)

Yeah. But neither do you.

ANGLE. WATER LEVEL.

Her toe goes into the water. The "swim platform" of the Daedalaus hovers just above the lagoon. Needless to say it's black.

SPLASH....

WIDER

Carrie dives into the lagoon and surfaces a few moments later. John stands at the rail of the dive deck.

JOHN

Carrie! Come back here.

She starts to swim away from the boat.

JOHN

Carrie! Come back!

ANGLE. CARRIE. FROM AMONGST THE MANGROVES.

She glides through the warm water... sensuously, beautifully... In the background John races down into the swim platform on the back of the boat.

JOHN

Carrie!

CLOSER. CARRIE.

She doesn't listen. Or she doesn't care. Carrie closes her eyes as she takes long strokes through the warm water.

ANGLE. CARRIE FROM UNDERWATER.

It's even more beautiful from below. The dappled sun backlights her as she glides across the surface of the lagoon. Her body stretches out-- fluidly, gracefully... a beautiful woman. After a moment or two the MUFFLED SOUND of John yelling resonates from a world away. And all at once, this STRANGE POV darts behind a rock....

ANGLE. CARRIE

She starts to swim toward the mangroves.

ANGLE. JOHN.

He's on the edge of the swim platform.

JOHN

Carrie! Come back!

ANGLE. A TREE LIMB.

It's thick and round like all the limbs of the mangroves. But, after a beat or two, this limb starts to move. It slithers forward, as a huge anaconda (water boa) drops off the edge of the tree and swims freely into the water.

ANGLE. CARRIE

She glides into the mangrove trees as John's voice bellows behind her.

JOHN

I'm serious.

Carrie swims into the grove of mangrove trees. All the roots twist and curve across the surface of the water. They glisten in the light. Any of them could be...

She freezes for a moment/glances down at her waist. Carrie is tangled in a thick clump of roots. She twists her body in order to get free.

JOHN

Carrie.

Suddenly the roots move with her. It winds itself around her waist and starts to pull her below the surface of the water.

CARRIE
CARRIE!...

CLOSER

She disappears for a beat... Comes back to the surface gasping for breath.

JOHN
CARRIE! COME BACK HERE!

CARRIE
(thrashing)
I'm stuck.

She gets pulled under again. Tries to wriggle free. Realizes it is a snake now wrapped three times around her torso

CARRIE
Oh my God! Oh My GOD!

JOHN
Come back here. NOW!

HIS POV

She is thrashing in the grove of mangroves, entwined in the anaconda. She looks back at the boat, desperately...

JOHN

Races to the edge of the platform...

JOHN
Carrie!

He glances around and grabs a line that is tied to a cleat on the stern. John flings it toward her.

JOHN
Carrie swim! Swim to the rope.

CARRIE

Flailing....

CARRIE
I can't...

And she goes under. Carrie comes back a moment later gasping for breath, looking at him....

JOHN
Swim!

CARRIE
Help me...

JOHN
Swim to the rope!

Their eyes lock for a beat before she goes under again. This time it lasts longer. 5... 10... 15 seconds. After what seems an eternity, the water around her starts to fill with blood. The Black Lagoon starts to go red with churning water.

CLOSER

And then, just as quickly it all goes quiet. A moment later Carrie bobs to the service, gasping for breath but very much alive. She looks around her, confused and amazed, but fine. After a beat, the body of a dead snake floats to the surface literally ripped in half. It's twenty feet long and looks like a dismembered telephone pole.

JOHN
Carrie! Swim!

ANGLE. CARRIE

This time she does but there is no urgency. Carrie leaves the bloody water behind as she starts to swim away from the mangrove trees.

UNDERWATER POV....

It's just as graceful and beautiful as it was the first time. The "POV" follows her for a beat, then ducks behind a rock....

JOHN (VO)
What was I supposed to do?

INT. CABIN. NIGHT

Carrie crosses past John in her underwear. She holds an ice pack against her bare shoulder.

CARRIE
Nothing. It's fine.

She removes the ice pack--looks at a large abrasion in the mirror.

JOHN
If I jumped in, there'd be two of us in there. It wouldn't have helped.

CARRIE
I said, it's fine.

She crosses into the bathroom without looking at him...

SHOT. THROUGH THE PORTHOLE.

Their conversation continues, glimpsed through the window to their bathroom. They move in and out of the FRAME as they cross back and forth across the porthole

JOHN

By the time I swam out there you would have been gone.

CARRIE

It's fine John. I told you. Just drop it.

JOHN

No. Obviously, it's not fine.

CARRIE

(turns)

I get it John. There was no way to save me. Just stop pretending that you always have to.

TIGHTER. INSIDE THE PORTHOLE...

He freezes for a beat--bulls eye. Carrie grabs her blouse-- moves past him...

CUT TO:

INT. LAB NIGHT.

It's dimly lit. Shut down for the evening. Various ultra-violet lights illuminate the beakers and cases that are part of the experiments. Led displays from a variety of instruments provide the rest of the weird soft glow. Morgan and Peter huddle with Walter in one corner of the lab. If you want a private conversation, this is the place for it.

PETER

His blimp had GPS on it. I took the location out of the memory.

MORGAN

And you checked with the Legal Department.

PETER

As long as we find the species independently, and register it before there's an existing patent, he has no proprietary claim.

MORGAN

Excellent.

(turns to Walter)

How's his sample doing?

WALTER

Take a look.

(points to the sample case)
Grown two feet in eight hours. It's
replicated its own branch and it's
starting to replace a limb.

INSERT. SAMPLE CASE

Sure enough, the "leaf" that Andrew cut is now almost a tree limb, trying replace what's "missing."

WALTER

I tried to do a spectral DNA analysis but I couldn't. PCR works by comparing DNA differences to a known genetic code. But this is its own code. The DNA doesn't resemble anything that we know of.

MORGAN

And what does that mean?

WALTER

(beat)

Things are "different" around here.

CUT TO

THE TREES (ANDREW'S "TREE STATION")

Bathed in moonlight. Andrew unfurls a sleeping bag across a net suspended two hundred feet up in the canopy. He has several comforts of home. A lantern to read. An inflatable pillow... He glances a hundred feet away at another tree beside him. Chloe has already set up her camp and is playing Nirvana on a small boom box. It's a weird moment-- Kurt Cobain blending with melodiously with the noises of the jungle. Andrew smiles....

CUT TO

INT. CABIN. NIGHT

Nirvana continues as John and Carrie head off to bed. They cross each other silently at the foot of the bed, heading off to their respective sides....

EXT. DIVE DECK. NIGHT.

Silently, stealthily, Wayne lowers the dinghy to the water while Morgan, Peter, Don, and several other crew members wait on the deck with headlamps and wool caps. They all have short wave radios clipped to their vest.

CLOSER

It seems like too many people for the boat, but when the dinghy is lowered it all becomes clear: Several local Indians are tied up beside them in dugout canoes, waiting to take this landing party through the mangroves.

WALTER (VO)

The only thing that could cause that much of a deviation in the DNA is a different evolutionary path.

CUT TO:

DAWN

Beginning to break over the tops of the trees. Just a faint bit of violet.

WALTER (V.O.)

...Somehow this place got cut off-- like the Galapagos. It evolved on its own-- like a self contained world....

FLOTILLA

Moving through the near-dark forest as they glide past the mangrove roots. The Indians all paddle silently beside them. It's eerie and beautiful.

FULL SHOT. DECK.

Half dark here as well. A "steward" turns a corner and heads up the walkway outside the cabins when he looks down and suddenly jumps....

CUT TO:

THE FLOTILLA...

They reach the bank at the edge of the lagoon. One of the crew members begins to have an animated conversation in a local Indian dialect.

MORGAN

What's he saying?

CREW MEMBER

Says he won't go any farther.

MORGAN

Why not?

CREW MEMBER

Local legend. Some jungle story.

MORGAN
What kind of a legend.

CUT TO

THE DECK...

A crowd of people gathers around the carcass of a huge anaconda laying just outside of John and Carrie's porthole. The snake has been coiled neatly, almost like it's being presented at a local market. The head, however, is missing.

REVERSE ANGLE. CROWD.

They stare down at it like it's some weird artifact.

SHOT. JOHN.

He tightens....

WIDE SHOT. DAEDALUS. LATER

Andrews blimp sits up on the flight deck a bright blazing orange in the morning sun....

INT. STAIRWELL

Andrew finds John at the main staircase that leads from deck to another..

ANDREW
How is she?

JOHN
(turning)
Fine.

ANDREW
You know there's anti-biotics in the infirmary if you need to...

JOHN
I know how to take care of her.

ANDREW
(beat)
Of course you do.

A standoff. John is about to respond when the LIGHTS IN THE STAIRWELL SURGE THEN FLICKER AND GO OUT. EMERGENCY LIGHTS COME ON ILLUMINATING THE CORRIDOR. THERE IS THE SOUND OF AN ALARM.

ANDREW
Jesus...

INT. ENGINE ROOM. ELECTRICAL PANEL....

It is much more of a computerized circuit board. LED displays and flat screen monitors diagram every section of the vessel. The panel is opened up revealing hundreds of microprocessors wired together in a huge electronic brain. This is the computerized "nerve center" of the ship. And it would all be terribly impressive if there weren't mangrove shoots sprouting from the metal seams between the panels. Andrew stands between Don and the chief engineer. It looks like a nursery.

ENGINEER

Grew up the cranks right into the engine housing then started spreading all over here.

(picks a leaf)

We've got it in conduit, we've got it wrapped around the stabilizers. I found a whole branch growing out of the data storage.

DON

What about the backup system?

ENGINEER

It ate the backup system. I've got one generator left and I'm using it to keep the lab cool. I think we're gonna have to blow all the seals.

ANDREW

Blow all the seals?

DON

The climate control and the biostatic systems are all computerized and there's no computer left. That's how this thing runs. I mean you could run it from New York, but without a computer....

(shakes his head)

Right now we're basically a very expensive raft.

ANDREW

So where's Morgan?

CUT TO:

THE JUNGLE.

They have landed and slogged their way a hundred yards inland. The swamp has turned to muddy dirt: damp, overgrown and screaming with insects...

MORGAN
It's just a wives' tale. You know, Big Foot. The abominable snowman. Every culture has one.

WAYNE
Yeah, but Dude--they live here.

MORGAN
I know. That's why they need the legend.

He glances down, at the hand held GPS in his hand.

MORGAN
From here we better fan out a little. Ramon--you go to the left. I'll stay in the middle with Wayne. Peter you take the right. Keep your radios on and check your GPS. We'll touch base every quarter mile.

They nod and start off through the jungle, away from the river....

SERIES OF SHOTS. DOORS.

The "seals" on the pressure locks are blown and the exterior doors pop open with loud "WHOOSE" -- like a can of coffee being opened. They swing open one after another as the hot, moist, jungle air floods the boat.

INT. KITCHEN.

Olivier is sweating and trying to whip some egg whites. His toque is drenched and humidity has caused the egg white to fall. Olivier flings them into the sink with disgust...

OLIVIER
Merde!

He looks down, then suddenly freezes. Olivier approaches the sink slowly, staring curiously at the bottom of it.

INSERT. HIS POV. SINK

A small mangrove leaf is growing toward him from the drain.

CUT TO:

THE JUNGLE.

Morgan and two crew members slog through the understory. They're Brazilian and they keep a keen eye on the jungle around them. Morgan looks down at his GPS.

ON THE RIGHT FLANK.

Wayne walks with Peter monitoring the handheld GPS as well. A howler monkey screams and they jump. Peter looks back down at the map...

ON THE LEFT.

Ramon moves with two other crew members. He pauses and wipes his brow, commenting on the heat in Portuguese. They agree with him. Ramon looks down at his GPS a little baffled (it's a First World toy.) The three of them try to decipher it for a moment when Ramon finally points for them to go in one direction and for him to go in another. They nod and head separate ways through the jungle...

ANGLE. MORGAN

He pauses and picks a leaf. Wrong one. Morgan reaches down and clicks his radio, giving coordinates.

ON PETER.

He responds, holding his earpiece, trying to block out the jungle noise. The entourage heads deeper as he looks down at the GPS....

ON RAMON.

He stumbles through the understory alone. Ramon pauses at a huge Orchid growing out of a rotted log. He takes his finger and touches the sweet sap on stamen. Ramon tastes it then moves deeper.

MOVING WITH HIM.

He starts to head up a slight grade. Ramon is a little portly and he is burdened by the all the high tech equipment secured to this vest: GPS, radio, flashlight, his sample case, a digital camera.... It's a lot. Ramon scales a couple of boulders that are covered in moss, then takes a breather. These are the headwaters, and the rainforest is starting its transition from the basin to the mountains.

LONG LENS. RAMON. THROUGH THE JUNGLE.

He scales a rocky outcropping and pauses at a tiny waterfall that is splashing down the moss. Ramon takes a sip of water and wipes his brow. He starts off again up the slight embankment when he sees something and suddenly pauses...

CLOSER

Ramon moves slowly toward a rock that is overgrown with vegetation. He reaches and pulls back some vines revealing the entrance to a cave.

FROM THE CAVE.

Ramon takes out a flashlight and starts to move slowly inside. He squints and moves the flashlight, scanning the walls.

RAMON'S POV. : FOLLOWING THE LIGHT...

It's damp and the rocky walls are slick with moisture. Ramon scans the sides and then the floor of the cave where there are the bones of some long-dead animal...

ON RAMON.

He pauses there looking at the pile of bones. Strange. Ramon lifts the flashlight shining it deeper into the cave. Suddenly...

AN EXPLOSION OF BATS

Engulfs his entire head. The noise is deafening as a thousand of them erupt from the walls and surge toward the opening.

RAMON

Drops to his knees and covers his head. When the bats have gone he glances toward the opening then picks up the flashlight.

WIDER.

He takes a deep breath and starts deeper into the cave.

FOLLOWING THE LIGHT.

More of the same: Rocky walls... an occasional boulder... slimy green moss and then just off to the right....

The face of CREATURE is staring back at him, fully illuminated, from no more than a couple of feet away.

RAMON

Freezes for a moment... stunned... motionless... petrified...

THE CREATURE....

Shies from the light-- his narrow reptilian eyes going even narrower. The head is massive: round and flared with huge armored plates that cover his gills. The jaws are enormous and powerful-- less like a croc and more something that is deadly and prehistoric. As he breathes several rows of razor sharp teeth are exposed dripping a thick viscous liquid--

The light is blinding and intense-- a focused halogen beam with a special lens. The Creature lifts his hands which are weirdly graceful. There are long fingerlike claws with razor sharp talons. One of them is attached to an opposable thumb.

He shields himself from the beam of light then lets out a high screeching, hissing exhale that is almost outside the range of human hearing. It's deafening and hard to perceive all at the same time. A moment later he lets out a louder one that is nearly intolerable.

ANGLE RAMON

Frozen, terrified he lowers the beam of light. Big mistake.

EXT. JUNGLE.

Morgan is hacking his way through a tangle of vines when he hears a distant SCREAM and suddenly freezes. He cocks his head to the side. There is another SCREAM...

SHOT. PETER

He hears it too. Peter listens for a beat then turns toward the source of the sound.

HANDHELD. RAMON.

Running through the jungle. The front of his shirt appears ripped with razor blades and most of his chest is bleeding. Ramon trips, but somehow keeps moving scrambling desperately to his feet as he flies through the understory.

CREATURE'S POV.

He darts in and out the foliage fluidly, comfortably. Ramon is fifteen feet ahead but the gap is shrinking quickly. Over a boulder... Under a tree limb... through a tangle of vines. Ten feet... eight feet... five feet....

RAMON

...hears the Creature closing and scrambles toward the trunk of strangler fig straight ahead. It flares out to a big wide base and is easy to climb. Ramon scurries up the tree through the understory grabbing at the crevices in the trunk and willing himself up the tree. After a while it gets too vertical to go any farther and Ramon glances back at the base of the trunk.

HIS POV. UNDERSTORY

The base of the tree is ringed with the broad green leaves that he just climbed through. They are dark and shiny, almost one foot in diameter. Most of the leaves blend together into a thick blanket of understory. But one of them is staring at him.

ANGLE CREATURE.

The camouflage is almost perfect. It takes a moment to pick out the face from the leaves. Instead of pursuing him however, the Creature just watches his treed prey, staring at him calmly from the thicket of jungle.

ANGLE. RAMON

He reaches high on the tree, desperate and terrified. Ramon clings to the trunk trying to inch his body higher. He reaches into his jacket and fumbles for a digital camera-- (even in a crisis it's a scientific expedition.) Ramon reaches higher up the trunk to get a better grip and suddenly feels something strange. It's sticky and wet. Tree sap?

HIS POV

Ramon glances up at his hand where the tree has turned bright yellow. There are a hundred poison dart frogs all clinging to his arm.

CUT TO

THE CRACKLE OF SHORT WAVE RADIO....

BASE OF THE TREE. LATER.

Ramon's body lies in the understory.

MORGAN (VO)
It was the tree frogs.

WIDER

The whole landing party has gathered around it. No one says a word.

WALTER (VO)
Okay...

INT. LAB. DAY.

The body lies on the long counter in Walter's science lab. It's the only cool place left on the boat. Next to Walter's samples and carefully labeled beakers Olivier has stacked baskets of produce and all the perishable food. Cool temperatures are at a premium.

MORGAN
(looking down at the body)
It's like getting a hundred snake bites.

WALTER
(beat)
So what took a chunk out his neck.

MORGAN
Some other animal. After he was dead.

WALTER
Big animal.

MORGAN

There are big animals around here.

WALTER

And they stopped eating him because...

MORGAN

...they tasted the toxins from the frog.

WALTER

Interesting theory.

MORGAN

(tightly)

None of this is a problem, Walter.

WALTER

Well-- you don't have half the food on the boat stacked up in your lab.

MORGAN

Oh no. I do have half the food on the boat stacked up in my lab.

WALTER

(back in his place)

Fine. I'll do an autopsy. Check for the toxins.

CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

Andrew comes vaulting up the stairs.

ANDREW

Un-be-fucking-lievable!

Morgan turns from the window. He's in a contre-temps with Peter and Don. All the windows have been thrown open wide and vines are literally growing inside the room. There are bugs and several large butterflies. It looks like a garden terrace.

ANDREW

You want it that bad? You want it that bad that you'd trash my research.

MORGAN

What are you talking about?

ANDREW

It's gone. Wrecked. Destroyed. The nets were torn down. All my samples were flung all over the canopy.

MORGAN

Sounds like fun, but I didn't touch
your research

He wipes his brow. Most of them are bathed in sweat.

ANDREW

Well somebody...

MORGAN

...tore down your little tree house,
but it wasn't me. You're in the
jungle Andrew. Shit happens.
(motions to the jungle)
Ramon is dead.

ANDREW

What? How?

DON

Good question.

MORGAN

(quickly)
Tree frogs. He climbed the trunk of a
tree and landed in a hundred poison
dart frogs.

ANDREW

(beat)
What was he doing climbing a tree?

Morgan blanches for a beat...

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM. LATER

A private place to talk. No windows. One door (shut) Over a
hundred degrees. They are bathed in sweat. The place is lit
with portable lanterns. The mural on the wall has turned to a
blank screen.

MORGAN

I don't care what he was doing climbing
a tree.

WALTER

Whatever chased him up there, snapped
his neck...

MORGAN

And my condolences to the entire
Esparza family, but we've got a job to
do Walter, and before we go looking for
"monsters" I think we should
concentrate on the job at hand. Don't
you?

WALTER
I never mentioned "monsters."

MORGAN
Good... Don't.

EXT. DIVE DECK.

John stands beside Wayne who is crouched beneath the small two-man sub lashed to the dive deck. He clutches a laptop in his hands.

JOHN
Five minutes.

WAYNE
Dude. I can't.

JOHN
Fine. Three minutes. Just enough to
power up and send one e-mail.
(pointing to the sub)
This thing has its own batteries right?

WAYNE
Yeah. But I need 'em.

JOHN
I'll give you a thousand dollars for
three minutes of power.

Wayne looks up at him...

WIDE SHOT. DAEDALUS

Hammocks have been strung up by the crew across every available inch of deck space. It looks like a boatload of refugees. The CAMERA starts pushing slowly toward...

THE BOW.

Olivier dumps baskets of rotting food overboard into the lagoon. There are heads of lettuce. Bags of tomatoes.

CHLOE (OS)
What the fuck are you doing?

She ENTERS THE SHOT. Grabs his arm...

OLIVIER
This is rotten. All of it.

CHLOE
So you dump it in the river?

OLIVIER

It stinks. Stink the whole boat. I
have nothing to cook.
(flings the potatoes)
Where I am going to find something to
cook!

Chloe glances toward the jungle....

TELEPHOTO. HOWLER MONKEY.

He plucks a fig from the end of a branch and starts munching
on the sweet fruit inside. Even though he's a monkey you can
tell it's delicious.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

It's now basically a greenhouse. Carrie lowers a pair of
binoculars, with a smile on her face. She wears shorts and
tied up safari shirt. Her hair is a wonderful mess.

ANDREW

You don't mind a bit, do you?

WIDER.

She turns to see him

CARRIE

(beat)

What?

ANDREW

The sweat the bugs.... You don't care
at all as long as you get to be out
there.

CARRIE

...No. I don't.

ANDREW

Why don't you come with us? It's
insane to stay here--this thing is just
a floating garbage can by now. We have
to fix the tree station and we could
use the help...

CARRIE

I don't know.

ANDREW

(beat)

John can come too.

Hold another beat....

CUT T

THEIR CABIN.

The door and windows are open. There's a vine growing through the porthole. Both of them are in shorts and T-shirts. Their faces are covered in sweat.

JOHN

Are you out of your mind?

CARRIE

We're boiling in here.

JOHN

You want to go live in a tree.

CARRIE

It's better than where we are.

JOHN

I'm not getting off this boat..

She just looks at him for a beat. He's unmasked. Momentarily weaker...

JOHN

I'm not getting off this boat and neither are you.

CLOSER

Carrie glances down at the vine growing through the porthole. It has small white flowers on the end that are starting to bloom. She touches it with her fingers.

CARRIE

(looking up)

Look-- I'm going to go stay in the tree station. I want you to come with me. I want us to be together. But if you're going to stay here, I'm still going to go stay in that tree station. And I'm gonna go now.

JOHN

Carrie....

CARRIE

You know, you used to say my name a lot differently than that.

ANGLE. DIVE DECK.

Ropes and netting are loaded into the dinghy along with Carrie's backpack. She sits near the bow of the small inflatable boat next to Chloe. Andrew turns the throttle of the outboard motor as they start off through the mangroves....

SHOT. PORTHOLE

"From "inside" the boat, John (bathed in sweat) watches them go...

INT. CABIN.

He turns away from the window. Looks down at his computer on the desk. He walks over to it and slowly, almost religiously hits the "power" button.

SHOT. SCREEN

it starts black but suddenly springs the life just as....

A SHEET....

Is pulled back from the CAMERA to reveal

WALTER

Staring down at something

INT. LAB.

He looks down at the lifeless body of Ramon lying on the counter. Walter sees something and leans a little closer toward the head.

CUT T

A CORRIDOR...

Walter running as fast as his sixty year old legs will carry him.

INT KITCHEN.

It's empty and dark sweltering (no windows). A couple of lanterns illuminate the huge room but all the food and Olivier are gone. Walter stands with Morgan and Peter off in one corner. They're in the shadows.

MORGAN

They healed?

WALTER

All the wounds on the neck... Those huge bite marks... Not a trace.

MORGAN

Jesus.

WALTER

What heals dead flesh?

Morgan just looks at him.

WALTER

See, all these species have an incredible regenerative capacity. The algae, that plant sample, now this. Only the wounds on the neck healed. Those slash marks on the body didn't.

MORGAN

Why not?

WALTER

Saliva?

MORGAN

Excuse me?

WALTER

Whatever bit him was close enough to his own DNA that it bonded and repaired the tissue. Created new tissue. Like that plant growing a new branch.

(trying to contain himself)
what I'm saying is-- let's say that's a spinal cord. Or a failing liver...

MORGAN

Jesus.

WALTER

I know you don't want to talk about monsters but I'd sure be looking for whatever bit his neck.

CLOSE UP MORGAN

Nods...

CUT TO:

THE DIVE LOCKER

They rifle through the effects of Ramon. His vest, his flashlight, his GPS... finally... his digital camera.

MORGAN

You're sure about this?

PETER

It was three feet from his body. That means he was holding it when he fell...

Morgan takes the camera and hits the "on" switch.

MORGAN

Battery's dead.

PETER

Like everything else.

He pops the memory card out of the side.

MORGAN

Go get my lap top.

EXT. DIVE DECK.

Morgan has piggy backed the power on the sub just like John did. A power cord is running into the battery pack on the side of the two man vessel. Moran pops in the memory card from the camera.

WAYNE

You know I ought to charge you for this.

MORGAN

(to Peter)

Tell him to keep quiet, please.

WAYNE

Dude, it's a joke.

SHOT. COMPUTER SCREEN.

It boots up with the Apple logo.. Then there is a pretty screen saver of Jensen Pharmaceuticals with smiling couples and bottles of pills. Then finally a menu appears where Morgan clicks "Photoshop".

REVERSE ANGLE.

They stare intently down at the screen-- their faces bathed in blue computer light. Morgan swats a bug.

SCREEN

He clicks a file and the images start popping up in front of them:

1)Several crew members acting silly... 2) Ramon and friends posing in their expedition gear... 4)A pretty shot of sunrise through the tree canopy... Finally...

CLOSER

A full frame of broad green leaves taken from somewhere up the tree trunk. They are dark and shiny-- almost one foot in diameter. All of them are exactly the same except for one. It has eyes.

MORGAN

Oh my God.

PETER

What?

MORGAN
(points)
Look at that.

EVEN CLOSER

His finger come to rest on the face of the Creature. Calm, intense, predatory, focused. He clicks twice and ZOOMS IN on that part of the image. The scales are huge-- almost armor plated. There is a thin row of razor sharp teeth.

WAYNE
Holy shit. Holy shit--it's that
freakin' fish!

WIDER

MORGAN
(turns)
What fish.

WAYNE
That JESUS fish. It's the same
freakin' face!

WALTER
What's a Jesus Fish?

WAYNE
(still flipped out)
Resurrected Dude. We speared that
thing right through the heart and then
it gets better!
(shudders)
Starts breathing.
(shudders again)
Fu-u-uck...

MORGAN
Yeah, but that's not a fish.

WALTER
I think maybe that's the point.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB.

With no windows it's gotten stifling. The generators are off and the air conditioning is gone. The food has all been removed but Andrew's sample has grown to the size of a small bush. Walter Morgan and Peter huddle alone. The place is illuminated with lanterns.

WALTER
Look you can call it a local legend if
you want to. I call it a series of
anecdotal sightings.
(MORE)

WALTER (cont'd)

And an anecdotal sighting is still data - it's just not data from a hard sample.

MORGAN

(exasperated)

Walter...

WALTER

No listen to me. The problem with the science up till now is that a bunch of algae isn't going to make a spinal cord grow back together. Or repair brain cells in a Parkinson's patient. But this thing... this "Creature..." It's bonded with human DNA. We know that because the guy's neck healed. AFTER he was dead....

MORGAN

It still could have been a leaf. That's only one photograph.

WALTER

Pretty vicious leaf. And I don't know about you but the teeth and eyes were pretty big give away.

Morgan nods. Concedes the point.

WALTER

So what does the legend say. It says he swims like a fish and runs on the land.

MORGAN

So.

WALTER

So that means he has lungs and gills. Because that's no aquatic mammal. He presents like a reptile.

MORGAN

Alright...

WALTER

So how does a frog evolve. First he has gills, then he grows legs, then he grows lungs and then he climbs out of the water...

(beat)

They didn't catch a fish. They caught a tadpole. That was a juvenile version of the creature.

WIDER.

It's weirdly silent. Almost a beautiful tableau. All three men stand frozen in the soft light of lantern.

MORGAN
(a little stunned)

So...

WALTER
Catch it once you can catch it again.
What's that DNA worth? I don't know--a
country. Fort Knox. All the art in
every museum in the world. I mean I
don't even know how you measure it.

Morgan pauses for a beat and takes the whole thing in. He takes a deep breath--glances around the lab. He can finally see the goal line.

MORGAN
(very composed)
Well. I think maybe it's time to go
fishing.

CUT TO:

A BOAT.

Small, metal, beat up with a loud outboard motor-- winding its way through the mangroves.

CLOSER.

Carrie sits in the bow. Chloe sits right behind her. Andrew sits in the back, with his hand on the tiller of the motor.

CRANE SHOT. TREE CANOPY.

The CAMERA glides down a long rope hanging from one of the trees to meet the boat as it arrives at the tree station. Chloe secures the rope. Carrie looks up toward the sky.

CARRIE
How do we get up there?

CHLOE
(smiles)
We climb.

She grabs a climbing harness from the floor of the boat and tosses it to Carrie. She looks down at the piece of equipment with all of its straps and buckles...

CUT TO:

EXT. DIVE DECK.

Wayne stands in front of an assembled group with full dive gear on. Morgan and Peter have suited up as well. This isn't conventional equipment. Instead of an air hose with a regulator, the divers all have a full dry suit with a Plexiglas bubble over their head. There are several bright yellow propulsion vehicles (sleds) lined up on the deck. It looks like they're headed toward outer space.

WAYNE

Okay, the suit is filled with a 50/50 oxygen-nitro mix. It makes breathing is easier and it keeps the bubble from fogging. These helmets have full communications but it's voice activated so don't hog the frequency. Freakin' mess down there when everybody's talkin' at once.

Various nods.

WAYNE

We found this thing about forty feet down in a hole by those rocks. We got to catch it alive so we're only gonna be using these tasers...

He holds up an underwater version of a stun gun. It looks like a small ray gun, bolted to his wrist.

WAYNE

They're non lethal but they put out thirty thousand volts so don't point it at the other children. That's basically enough juice to stun a hippo.

Various nods. They adjust their tasers.

WAYNE

Any questions?

Pause....

WAYNE

Alright then. Lets....

CHLOE (VO)

GO!

IN THE TREES....

Chloe gives a gentle push and Carrie plunges off a tree limb, soaring through the forest. She lets out a scream of terror and delight and freedom, as she scatters the birds and spider monkey in her wake...

PAN SHOT.... (LONG LENS)

It ought to last forever... she hurtles through the canopy with a sudden gift of flight. Fear, exhilaration and ultimately....

ANDREW

Waiting in the tree station at the other end. She lands more or less in his arms. Carrie looks up and trying to catch her breath...

CARRIE

(beat)

That was insane.

ANDREW

Great, hunh.

CARRIE

Insane.

WIDER

Chloe whoops and cheers from the other tree. Carrie gives her a thumbs up.

CARRIE

(still breathless/back to Andrew)

I mean-- You know, terrifying but...

ANDREW

That was the good part?

She looks. He nods. A beat...

ANDREW

You know, everybody says they want to conquer their fear... What a whole load of rubbish.

(beat)

Who wants to lose a perfectly good emotion?

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

That one landed... It's suddenly close quarters up in the tree.

ANDREW

So-- you ready to try it again?

CARRIE

(beat)

Uh-- sure.

ANDREW

Only this time you're gonna go to that other tree and transfer to a 2nd rope.

CARRIE

No I'm not.

ANDREW

Yeah you are. You can do this.

She looks back at him.

ANDREW

Cmon-- you know you can.

CLOSE UP

Carrie smiles slightly. She looks out toward the canopy.

UNDERWATER. BLACK LAGOON.

The flotilla of bright yellow "sleds" descends into the dark water of the lagoon. With their vehicles and their large bubble helmets, it's almost Flash Gordon.

WAYNE

(crackly:over the comm system)

Okay...stop and hold at 30 feet...

He hovers just above a small group of rocks. The rest of the party joins him.

WAYNE

Good... The rock hole is over there around ten o'clock. Duane, copy that?

DUANE

Copy...

WAYNE

Duane comes with me. Everyone else holds in formation. Pablo, have a second net ready. He may come flying out of there.

PABLO

Copy that.

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

Wayne's sled descends nimbly down to 45 feet where a large rock formation suddenly appears. They are huge boulders and it's starting to get darker. The dry suits with their plexiglass helmets recirculate the air so there aren't even any bubbles. The whole thing is weirdly silent.

WAYNE
(crackly...)
Right here.

He drops his sled down toward a large overhand in the rocks.
Wayne is close to 50 feet down. He checks his taser.

WAYNE
Ready on the net?

DUANE
Ready.

CLOSER. (FROM INSIDE THE ROCK HOLE)

Wayne inches closer, letting the sled slide up to rocky opening. He takes a light and begins to shine it inside the cave, scouring the rock walls.

Nothing.

Wayne inches closer still bumping the sled up against the long ledge of rock. He cranes his head (bubble) and reaches his arm inside trying to get a glimpse of the interior.

Beat....

WAYNE
FUCK!

DIFFERENT ANGLE. (FROM OUTSIDE THE CAVE)

He yanks his arm out, but something comes with it. A five foot "serpent" is latched onto the other end, with a vice like grip on his dry suit. Wayne flings his arm trying to get rid of the long "Jesus fish" that has clamped down on his arm. Blood starts to ooze in the water.

WAYNE
(agony)
Ahhh... Mother-FUCKER..... Get the
taze.... Ahhh.

He flails his arm while the long tale of the "serpent" slashes and whips... It's a mess. Duane moves up trying to aim the tazer without electrocuting Wayne in the process.

WAYNE
Get him!

Then just as quickly, the "fish" lets go. This five foot serpent darts away at blistering speed-- swimming through a small crack then up over the top of the rocky ledge...

ON WAYNE

Despite the injury he knows what this means. Wayne hits the accelerator on his sled and takes off after this "creature" darting over the top of the ledge, almost as fast as the fish he is following.

FOLLOWING THEM....

It's a high speed chase through the weirdest terrain imaginable. This creature darts and weaves through the mangrove roots and boulders with Wayne and his aqua-sled in close pursuit. With the throttle opened up, the "gup-v" (guided underwater propulsion vehicle) can do almost twenty five knots and corner on a dime.

The "serpent" darts through a narrow hole in the rocks and Wayne banks in after it.

WAYNE

*Got him. Fifteen feet off my bow,
heading down to 70...*

WIDER

A long line of divers follows Wayne as he descends deeper into the black lagoon. It's a strange sight: a trail of bright yellow sleds streaking down into the darkness of this abyss.

WAYNE'S POV. THE "FISH"

The creature cuts left, then right as Wayne makes split second turns to stay with him. He grazes the root of a mangrove... scatters a school of tropical fish... cuts hard to the right just missing a boulder...

ON WAYNE

He tries to aim the taser, as his prey darts elusively lower in the lagoon. One moment he has him, the next he slips away. Wayne leans on the accelerator as they hurtle toward the bottom.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

He closes in on this "creature" extending his arm and finally taking aim. Wayne steers with one hand and points the taser with the other. A long line of sleds follows him into the depths three or four seconds behind.

WAYNE

I think I got him

HIS POV...

The fish is no more than ten feet away, when he suddenly darts to the left disappearing into a small opening in the rock wall. Wayne banks to the right and follows him inside a cave.

INT. GROTTA....

It shimmers with bioluminescence... nature's source of artificial light. All around him micro-organisms are shedding a strange incandescent glow

WAYNE

Despite the chase, Wayne is awed. He glances around, getting his bearings in this strange glistening world-- searching for the "fish."

MORGAN

We're coming in... Do you copy.

WAYNE

(still looking)

Copy that...

MORGAN

(hesitant)

Is it safe to come in?

Wayne doesn't answer... He glides forward cautiously then suddenly stops. His prey is halfway across the grotto... suddenly calm with a false sense of security.

WAYNE

(as if to the small creature)

Oh I get it... You're home.

SHOT. WAYNE.

He moves slowly, silently forward with the sled, taking care not to disturb the "fish". Wayne readies his taser...

WAYNE

(over the comm frequency: a whisper)

Okay-- Just Pablo and Duane. I need two nets...

WAYNE'S POV

The small serpent glides in what seems a predictable and familiar pattern, reassured by his surroundings. It looks prehistoric but beautiful in the phosphorescent light.

WIDER

Two more sleds move slowly up to Wayne's which is now hidden behind a ledge of rocks.

WAYNE

Get ready.

DUANE

Copy...

CLOSER. "FISH"

He glides back and forth along a rock wall feeling the freedom of his environment. The "fish" has just executed a long graceful turn, when all at once, he jerks, thrashes then suddenly freezes-- literally paralyzed as he floats stiffly in the water.

WAYNE

Now!

REVERSE ANGLE

They burst out from behind the rocks flinging a net over the "fish" and pulling it into the side of the sled. Wayne removes the micro "taser" wires and they bundle up their prey quickly, securing him to one of the vehicles.

WAYNE

Let's go.

They turns and start to head toward the small opening in the grotto

WAYNE

Woo hoo... fuckin' A! Good day at the fishing hole boys!

CLOSER

The small "creature" comes back to life and starts to twitch but he is secured tightly. Wayne tugs the net closer...

SHOT. CAVE OPENING

They start to exit the grotto. First Wayne, then Pablo, then Duane on the rear... When the last sled is heading through, the CAMERA SHOT SUDDENLY STARTS TO MOVE TOWARD THE OPENING... AND FAST.

MOVING POV. (THE CREATURE'S)

It begins to close in on the sled's just as they leave the entrance to the grotto

LAGOON

They exit the grotto (and its shimmering luminescence) one by one. The sleds start heading toward the surface...

WAYNE

(to Morgan on the Comm
frequency)
(MORE)

WAYNE (cont'd)
DUDE! Check this out. We bagged an
eight point buck

CLOSE UP. DUANE

He chuckles listening to the radio. All at once, his look changes.

DUANE
Wayne... I got a.... Got a prob.. my
sled stopped...

He jams the accelerator but it still doesn't move. Duane has a nervous and "troubled" look on his face. He feels something then glances behind him, turning in the bubble.

CLOSER. DUANE'S HEAD

The screen fills with a sudden SWIPE OF GREEN.....

SHOT. WAYNE

He hears a muffled scream then silence on the COMM frequency...

Wayne turns then freezes.

HIS POV

A decapitated body is speeding around in circles still attached to its bright yellow sled. Duane's head, now bloody, floats to the surface inside the bubble helmet...

SHOT. PABLO

He looks up toward the surface in horror. Pablo freezes at the sight of his friend's head floating to the top like a child's balloon.

WAYNE

PABLO!

He looks down just in time.

REVERSE ANGLE

The CREATURE (adult version) is speeding toward him through the water at a blistering rate of speed.

PABLO

Terrified and shaking still points and fires the taser.

THE CREATURE

Almost knowingly ducks the first dart.

PABLO

More terrified, aims and fires three more.

THE CREATURE

Nimble ducks three more (right, left, right). One of the errant darts misses and nails....

PETER

...in the neck, who is swimming up from behind. He jerks, convulses from the 30,000 volts, then drives his sled into a rocky crevice shattering his helmet in a torrent of bubbles.

CLOSER PETER

He is tazed and immobilized and doesn't even know he is drowning....

ANGLE. CREATURE

He bores in on Pablo's sled, grabbing him with his huge extended claws.

BUT...

...instead of instantly dismembering him, the creature just envelopes Pablo (and the sled) in his massive arms, rendering him motionless. He comes face to face with his human prey, staring into the helmet, almost trying to understand the nature of his intruder. If you didn't know better it would look like a hug.

TWO SHOT. CLOSER STILL

Pablo stares at him. Terrified... powerless... totally immobilized. The Creature makes sure he gets a good look, before reaching up to the back of the dry suit.

INSERT. PABLO'S DIVE SUIT

There is a rubber gasket where the air supply meets the bubble helmet. Deliberately, smoothly, the Creature reaches back with a long razor like claw, and slits the rubber gasket like someone using a letter opener.

PABLO

Still immobilized, starts to jerk in terror as his helmet begins to fill with water

THE CREATURE

Just tightens his grip and watches this other poor "creature" without any gills, starting to inhale the water.

PABLO

Gasps and cries out, then does what all drowning men do as he starts to breathe in the river. The creature tightens his grip as Pablo twitches and writhes, then all at once this monster freezes.

NEW AXIS

Wayne has nailed the creature in the back with a tazer from fifteen feet. The water around them has gone red with blood (from Duane's decapitation) but you can still see the suddenly frozen creature, locked in a death grip with the drowning Pablo.

MORGAN

Let's go.

WAYNE

We gotta...

MORGAN

He's dead. Let's go.

Wayne looks down at them. He probably is, dead. The creature still floats, momentarily tazed.

MORGAN

(a direct order)

Now.

(beat)

We've got the little one. Let's go.

UP. ANGLE. FROM THE RIVER BOTTOM

It looks like a battle field. A decapitated body clings to one sled while another has been smashed against the rocks. Pablo lies lifeless and drowning while everywhere else the river is tinged with red. Morgan and Wayne flee the scene with their cargo in tow...

CUT TO:

EXT. TREE STATION. DUSK

Carrie sets up camp in her own tree a hundred and fifty feet above the jungle floor. There's a cacophony of birds and a "window box" of fresh bromeliads. Andrew has given her a tiny lantern to read and an Ipod for a lullaby. What else do you need.

ANDREW

See what a gentleman I am. Separate accommodations.

CARRIE

It's lovely.

ANDREW

Walked to your door and everything.

She hears the tone. It's a small net and there isn't much room up there. Their eyes lock for a beat...

ANDREW
Well--if you need anything, just use the whistle. I'll swing over in a jiffy.

CARRIE
I like this hotel.

ANDREW
Bedrooms are tight but the bathroom is huge.
(beat)
Stay clipped in even if you need to pee in middle of the night.

CARRIE
(laughs)
I will... How romantic.

ANDREW
(smiles)
Well-- some things just need to be said.

They share the smile. It lingers...

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Better be off.

He grabs a tree limb and hoists himself up on the net. Andre clips a carabiner to one of the lines and yanks it a couple o times to test the strength. Carrie watches as he glances back, smiles at her, then leaps off the side of the tree house, hurtling into the jungle.

It LITERALLY is perfect.

SHOT CARRIE

She rolls over on her back. Carrie stares up into the canopy listening to the sounds blend together: two hundred species-- one perfect harmony. The light is fading-- turning the leave to shadows and she stares up at them, making it last as long as she possibly can.

CUT

THREE FACES... (STARING STRAIGHT DOWN)

Morgan, Wayne and Walter stare mesmerized at something beneath them. Their eyes go back and forth in unison.

THEIR POV. FISH TANK

It thrashes back and forth in the tank looking for a hole in the wall. The "fish" is five feet long and barely contained by the huge bait tank in the back of the lab. The place is lit by candle light and everyone is sweating.

WIDER

Don the captain is standing just off to the side.

WAYNE

That's not the same one.

MORGAN

Why not?

WAYNE

It's three times the size.

WALTER

You might have noticed things grow pretty fast around here.

WAYNE

Well yeah but...

WALTER

When was the last time you saw a tree eat a ship?

The "fish" suddenly lunges out of the water, heaving its teeth and hissing at them. It has the exact same face as the large creature only smaller and without the body behind it. They watch it for several seconds as it snatches at the air, spitting at them and flopping against the walls of the tank.

This fish is breathing.

WALTER

Jesus.

MORGAN

How long will a spectral analysis take.

WALTER

As soon as we can power up. A full DNA scan takes six hours but it needs way more power than we've got. The spectrometer alone would use up the batteries in about fifteen minutes.

MORGAN

So without the generators how could....

WALTER

Solar panels.

Beat.

WALTER

If we wait until sunlight and run the photovoltaic cells right into the batteries, we could be powered up in...

JOHN (O.S.)

This is bullshit!

WIDER

He crashes into the lab, foaming. John hasn't bathed or shaved in a couple of days and that, combined with the agitation makes him look like a twisted prophet.

JOHN

They're dead! Did you know that.
They're DEAD!

MORGAN

(quietly)
Get him out of here.

JOHN

That's okay with you! We've got a seven people dead! Dead bodies.

MORGAN

Don please. Get him out of here.

JOHN

We should all be getting out of here.
Instead of your stupid little science experiment we should all be...

MORGAN

You are here because of our little science experiment. And you are our guest.

JOHN

Your guest.

The little creature hisses at him.

JOHN

What the fuck is that?

MORGAN

I'm serious Don. Get him out. Now.

DON

Cmon along...

JOHN

(being pulled away)
This is insane. What the hell does it take. What are you waiting for?

(MORE)

JOHN (cont'd)
 (from down the hall)
 What are you waiting for.....

They glance at each other for a beat...

CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATION DECK. NIGHT

It's silent. Well not silent but no one is talking. All the windows are open and the sounds of the jungle scream through them. Morgan checks his watch.

WALTER
 What time is it.

MORGAN
 Two thirty.
 (beat)
 How long till sunrise?

WALTER
 Three hours.

Morgan nods. He takes a deep breath. Looks out at the jungle.

DAWN

Great big fireball through the trees...

HALLWAY

Wayne heads down a corridor on the lower deck. He turns left entering

THE LAB....

Wayne crosses the empty room toward the bait tank in the back. Like all good fishermen, he's going to check his catch.

ON WAYNE. UP ANGLE

He crosses over to the tank and glances down. He looks perplexed. Wayne scans the container for a beat, then turns and bolts from the room....

HALLWAY....

Wayne, Morgan Walter and Don all move down the hall at a rapid clip. They're carrying lanterns.

MORGAN
 Are you sure?

WAYNE
Dude. You'll see for yourself.

INT. LAB.

It is suddenly bathed in light. Morgan hurries over to the edge of the tank shining his electric lantern at it. He gets a sick look on his face.

REVERSE ANGLE. TANK

The fish is gone, but his tail remains-- floating on the surface of the water.

WIDER. ROOM

They look down in the disbelief.

MORGAN
Something ate him? What the fuck ate him?

WALTER
Nothing ate him.

MORGAN
Well something sure got in here....

WALTER
He was a tadpole right? Well he lost his tail.... He's just not a baby anymore.

MORGAN
So what the hell is he?

WALTER
(beat)
A teenager.

CUT

HALLWAY. B DECK

A tiny version of the actual Creature scurries down the hallway in quick jerky movements. In the dim light he looks almost like an under-cranked cartoon as he skitters to the end and darts around a corner.

INT. BRIDGE.

Don near the helm issuing firearms to the remaining crew. In addition to Morgan and Wayne there are four Brazilian crew members and a reluctant Walter.

WALTER
I don't know how to use one of those.

DON
(offering the pistol)
Take it anyway.

EXT. MAIN DECK.

They fan out from the bridge in two directions, half toward the bow. Half toward the stern.

INT KITCHEN.

The windows are open and the galley is reeking. Olivier is muttering something underneath his breath as he tries to cook, blending the remaining few ingredients that have not spoiled in the heat.

CLOSER

He tosses his dreadlocks away from his face and wipes his brow. Olivier tastes an aioli mayonnaise he is making and decides that it needs more mustard.

He crosses to the pantry... Big mistake.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

The tiny Creature lunges at him from out of the darkness and clamps onto Olivier's face. It's probably his first human meal and he attacks it with a youthful enthusiasm--gnawing at Olivier's flesh and clamping onto his head with freshly grown claws.

CLOSER

They fall to the floor together, Olivier trying to tear the Creature off him and the young reptile savaging Olivier's skin. The more blood he tastes, the more frenzy it seems to create. This young monster gouges at Olivier's eyes and starts to rip at his neck with razor sharp teeth-- instinct begins to take over...

CUT TO:

MORGAN

He presses the ear piece of his walkie talkie trying to listen.

MORGAN
What. Where?

KITCHEN

They stare down at the dismembered body of their chef--savaged beyond all recognition.

DON
Some teenager.

Walter moved up to the group and glances down....

WALTER
Jesus.

MORGAN
He's obviously right around here.
Let's split up and work the deck in two
directions.

INT. CORRIDOR

A flashlight moves up a hallway with a silhouetted figure behind it. Wayne holds a gun pointing at no one in particular.

CLOSER

He pauses at a door.

INT STOREROOM

The door is ajar and Wayne pushes it open. He moves into the large "pantry".

HIS POV

Wayne scans the boxes and bins of canned food-- their last remaining supplies.

All at once he hears something to his left.

Wayne whips the flashlight over to a stack of boxes and illuminates two eyes staring right back at him. He FIRES FIVE SHOTS that RICOCHET wildly all around the small metal room.

WIDER.

A small spider monkey skitters out of the storeroom, leaving behind the box of crackers he was devouring.

WAYNE.

Feels something and glances down at his arm.

INSERT. WAYNE'S ARM

One of the ricocheting bullets has hit him in the forearm. There is an oozing bullet hole the size of a quarter.

...Blood.

Wayne dabs, then smears it, then starts to feel it.

WAYNE

FUCK.

He starts out of the room, clutching his bleeding arm.

CORRIDOR

Wayne starts down the darkened hallway, holding his wound.

EXTREME CLOSE UP. FLOOR. (SLOW MOTION)

A drop of blood hits and splatters.

LONG SHOT. WAYNE

He limps toward the CAMERA with the dark corridor behind him. Suddenly, from out of the shadows, a figure begins to run toward him (bucky-jerky) at a tremendous rate of speed. The small creature bores in its target, lunges at Wayne and latches (almost frenzied) onto the back of his leg.

CLOSER WAYNE

He screams, and turns, and FIRES two SHOTS but this Creature is behind him-- gnawing at his ankle-- trying to take him down. Wayne fights his way up the hallway, desperately trying to escape.

DIFFERENT ANGLE. SPIRAL STAIRCASE

It is the metal stairway that leads down to the engine room. Wayne and the Creature TUMBLE together, landing in a heap at the bottom. Wayne tries to get up but the creature latches onto his throat with a vice grip. Wayne starts to scream but the scream fades as the animal pulls him down gnawing into his windpipe. IT'S his second kill and he's getting better at it.

CLOSER

Wayne clutches at the creature, trying to pull him off, but it's no use. He's tasted blood and he's tasting more. The animal takes a new bite, seizing his entire throat when all at once, SIX SHOTS RING OUT IN RAPID SUCCESSION.

REVERSE ANGLE. STAIRWELL

Morgan stands at the top of the stairs pointing a pistol straight down. He moves down the stairway toward the pile of bodies lying at the bottom.

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

The creature has six bullet holes in the back. Morgan rolls him over. Wayne has six holes in his chest.

REVERSE ANGLE

He looks up. Don and Walter are staring down at him from the railing.

MORGAN
(a fact)
He was dead already.

They freeze a beat....

CLOSE UP CREATURE

Half man/half reptile-- he stares into the camera with blank dead eyes.

CUT 1

CARRIE

As he opens hers to greet the day.

WIDER... SLIGHTLY...

Carrie blinks away sleep staring at the camera. As she comes to consciousness, bringing to world into focus, her eyes widen...

REVERSE ANGLE. HER POV

The Creature (adult and huge) is staring at her from no more than ten feet away. He clutches a neighboring tree, seemingly a part of the leaves.

SHOT. ANDREW

He hears the SCREAM and looks over. Carrie is scrambling to her feet, trying to get her footing in the nylon net.

ANDREW (OS)
What's wrong? What's the matter?

She gropes for the rope with fumbling fingers.

ANDREW
WHAT'S WRONG?

She glances backwards but only a weird tone comes out. She can't make any consonants.

REVERSE ANGLE. CARRIE'S POV.... CHLOE.

Her body dangles from the net of her tree station shredded and mutilated beyond all recognition...

CARRIE
(can't talk)
Uurmmhgh Uuurhmmwarugh.....

THE CREATURE

...moves slowly from one branch to another....

CARRIE

clips into the rope and literally flings herself off the edge of the platform. It isn't enough of a real jump to make it to Andrew and she starts to swing helplessly in mid-air.

CARRIE

Pleeeeeease.....

SHOT. ANDREW.

ANDREW

It's okay. I'll get you.

He moves to the edge of his net and puts on his harness...

SHOT. CARRIE

She starts to swing more slowly, back and forth: a weird pendulum suspended in the jungle. Carrie looks at Andrew but then glances back behind her...

HER POV

Smoothly gracefully, the Creature is using his long arms and claws to glide toward her through the trees. He's built for this.

CARRIE

(faintly.... terrified)

Hurry....

ANGLE ANDREW

Swings toward her but misses the rope. He swings back to his own tree station to try again.

ANGLE. THE CREATURE

Flies from tree limb to tree limb with the grace of something half his size.

SHOT. ANDREW

He flings himself off of his tree station and hurtles through the canopy, this time managing to grab Carrie's rope. He seizes it with two hands and starts to slide down to her.

ANGLE CREATURE

Swings closer to them, lunging for a tree limb.

ANDREW AND CARRIE

He reaches her and clips her to his harness when there is a suddenly loud crack above them....

UP ANGLE. CANOPY

What held one person cannot hold two. All at once their tree limb snaps in half, plummeting them toward the jungle floor

CRANE SHOT. DROPPING WITH THEM

They slam into tree after tree limb as they plunge downward, clutching onto one another... Bam... bam... bam.... the branches snap under the force of their wait as they hurtle down to the

WATER.

Five feet deep in this flooded marsh and riddled with three roots.

SLAM

They hit with a huge splash still entwined and maybe dead. They lie there motionless for several seconds-- covered in mud - neither one breathing. After a beat, Carrie revives first. She comes to her senses and glances up toward the canopy.

HER POV

A monster's face is staring straight down at her. But this one has black eye and bright red cheeks. There are huge rings in his earlobes.

ANGLE. CARRIE

She stares for a beat. Andrew starts to stir...

CUT

A DUGOUT CANOE.

Gliding through the swamp. The indian in the back (Red cheeks, black eyes) gently guides his log boat in and out of the mangrove roots.

ANGLE. DAEDULUS

It is now eaten by the jungle. The vessel looks like it has been camouflaged by hundreds of Navy Seals. Vines over grow almost every inch of it. Only Andrew's bright orange blimp stands in modern contrast, poking out from the top.

CLOSER

The canoe glides through the black lagoon up to the "swim board" in the back. Don rushes to meet them at the stern

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP DECK. LATER.

They stand beside the ship's solar panels that have been jury-rigged to a bank of batteries. It's slightly after two o'clock and they are gleaming in the sun. Morgan scans the horizon for clouds, ignoring Andrew who is inches from his face.

ANDREW

This isn't safe.

MORGAN

Well that's pretty clear.

ANDREW

We can get fifteen people in that launch. On one tank of gas we can get a hundred miles down river and by then we're in the main current....

MORGAN

Yeah. And then we can get to a town and even get to a phone and you can get on the satellite and we can share the patent.

(beat)

I don't think so.

ANDREW

Wait-- that's it? That's what this is about?

Morgan checks the batteries which are showing a positive charge...

ANDREW

You're insane!

MORGAN

Ten hours isn't going to make a difference

ANDREW

You've got eight people dead.

MORGAN

And all of them knew they were going to the amazon.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK. LATER...

It is now a greenhouse. There are almost as many plants inside as out. John has Carrie off in a corner. He clutches his laptop and speaks in a hushed but manic tone.

JOHN

Okay... I bought five minutes worth of juice...

(furtively)

But see-- when they charged the computer, I actually got about fifteen minutes worth of a charge...

CARRIE

John....

JOHN

(hates being interrupted)

Just listen to me.

(closer)

So I got our exact GPS coordinates from Wayne's sled. He has a GPS on it.

CARRIE

Okay....

JOHN

(triumph)

Well I've sent like 90 e-mails: American consulate in Manaus... American consulate in Belem... The Coast Guard, Carrie... I sent to like 20 people back in New York. We're gonna be out of here by tomorrow.

CARRIE

(beat)

...Alright.

JOHN

We are. All we gotta do is stay here, now look at this....

He opens a small valise right next to him. John swats away a bug.

JOHN

Bottled water, canned food. I got it from the storeroom. None of this stuff can spoil. Now the way I figure it, this is the safest spot on the boat cause there's only one stairway in an out and we're three decks up.

(beat/hope...)

We're safe...

CLOSER

They share a look. He's all fear. She used to be. It's a strange moment. She starts to glance away....

ANDREW (OS)

We gotta get the fuck out of here.

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

Andrew comes up in from the "only entrance." He crosses over to them.

ANDREW

The guy's out of his mind. If we get the launch right now, we can get halfway to Iquitos before...

JOHN

We don't need to do that.

Andrew looks.

JOHN

We're fine right here.

ANDREW

No we're not, mate.

JOHN

Yes we are.

He's breathing heavy. Almost willing it into being. John fights for calm. It's a little deranged.

ANDREW

(slowly...)

Alright. Why don't you two wait here. I'll be back in about ten minutes.

CUT TO:

A RUBBER DRY BAG.

The kind divers use to seal their belongings. Andrew throws an array of survival gear into the top: Flare gun... Flashlights...Mylar blankets and rain ponchos...a locator beacon... It's a checklist for life on a raft.

ANDREW.

Hesitates, then grabs a gun.

TRACKING WITH HIM.... MAIN DECK

Andrew moves quickly with the drybag down an external staircase. He pauses at the base of stairs, then heads toward the rear of the boat, moving quietly to remain undetected.

ON HIM.

He gets to the end of the pilot house then suddenly stops. Andrew stares in disbelief at something that is happening fifteen feet off the stern.

REVERSE ANGLE.

Don stands alone in the launch, pointing a pistol straight down at the hull of the boat. A small kayak is tied to boat beside him. He glances back toward the Daedalus...

MORGAN

Hurry.

All at once Don drills five SHOTS into the bottom of the launch and the boat begins to swamp with water.

CLOSER

When it gets past his ankles, Don climbs awkwardly into the tied up kayak and begins to paddle away as the launch starts to sink behind him. By the time he reaches the "swim board" of the Daedalus, the launch is halfway underwater.

SHOT. ANDREW.

He stares stupefied, disbelief.

CUT 1

A MACHETE....

As he violently hacks through some vines.

WIDER. (OBSERVATION DECK)

Andrew whacks away at the invading vegetation with a weird kind of fervor. It's half urgency-- half therapy.

CARRIE

(entering)

What are you doing?

WHACK....

ANDREW

Closing the windows.

CARRIE

What's going on?

ANDREW

He sunk the boat. Fucking lunatic. He just sunk our only way out of here.

CARRIE
Why?

ANDREW
(turns)
Hundred million dollars. Makes people
do strange things.

He goes back to HACKING, more VIOLENTLY.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Why don't you both grab machetes and
help me start ceiling this place up.

JOHN
Well do you really think that's....

ANDREW
(less "patient" than usual)
Look. That's a big animal. It
probably has only one offspring and
they just killed it. If it can find
three of us up in a tree, it find a
ship in the middle of its habitat.

He starts hacking at a thick vine...

ANDREW
Cmon. Lets shut these window.

Carrie hesitates, then grabs a machete. She swings it back
and takes a huge HACK at one of the vines...

INT. LAB.

Dismembered pieces of the "little" creature are scattered
across a marble lab table. It's somewhat organized. His legs
are in one corner. His gutted torso in another. Both "hands"
(complete with their razor sharp claws) are sitting in beakers
of formaldehyde next to Walter. It's all dimly lit with a
single lantern. The head sits in a bowl off to the side.

MORGAN
How much longer?

WALTER
We've got an eighty percent charge. By
the time I prepare all the slides, the
machine'll be ready to go.

MORGAN
And how long will the scan take?

WALTER
Five or six hours. Tops.

MORGAN
(long time)
Jesus.

WALTER
(turns...)
Well-- it took him a long time to
evolve like this. It might take five
or six hours to pull it apart.

He looks back at his work without waiting for a response.
Walter pulls one of the "hands" from a beaker. It looks
strangely delicate...

CUT

EXT. A DECK. NIGHT.

Don keeps guard over his ship like a sentry. The last bit of
twilight is gone and the sky has started to go black.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

They have sealed the place up. It is stifling but airtight.
All the vines that are now pressing against the window are
illuminated in weird fluorescent light from Andrew's lantern.
The three of them huddle in one corner.

JOHN
And you locked the entrance?

ANDREW
Of course

JOHN
(still NY)
Double locked it?

ANDREW
There's only one lock.

He nods. Silence for a beat. A howler monkey shrieks and
goes skittering across the glass. They jump and then watch
him run into the darkness beyond the lantern. Somebody
sighs...

INT. LAB.

There is a low steady Hummmmm. The spectrometer has been
powered up and Walter is ready to analyze the first slide. H
writes it down in a log book and announces his procedure out
loud even though Morgan doesn't understand.

WALTER
Okay. This is the first slide. A five
micron transect of liver tissue, taken
from just above what appears to be the
bile duct.

WIDER.

The rest of the little creature's body is scattered all over the lab. He has been dismembered over forty square feet. Walter and Morgan are now illuminated only in the glow of the spectrometer. The rest of the place is dark.

WALTER
(inserting the slide)
Alright-- let's find out how different
this place is...

CUT TO:

A SCREAM.

Just another HOWLER MONKEY but it makes Don jump. He looks out into the blackened jungle still holding his gun. Don listens to the Amazon for a moment then continues on his "rounds". Don "feels" something and stops.

CLOSER

It's sticky. Even here Don keeps his decks perfectly swabbed and there is something sticky on the deck. He reaches down to feel it. Don come up with a thick, viscous slime on his fingers. It seems to be all over the deck. He touches it. Runs it back and forth between his thumb and his forefinger. Really sticky. All at once, Don senses something and turns around.

EXTREME CLOSE. DON

His mouth opens but that's it. Don, freezes in horror for a beat.

CUT TO:

A DECK. (ONE DECK ABOVE HIM)

A Brazilian crew member is keeping watch on the upper deck-- striding up and back with the security of his sidearm. He gets to the end of his "post", makes a slow turn, and has just started back in the other direction when the decapitated body of his captain suddenly lands at his feet.

CLOSER

Don's body hits the deck with a bloody THUD, thrown violently up from below. The head is severed cleanly above the shoulders and blood oozes across the deck from the open wound.

THE CREW MEMBER

Freezes, screams... runs to the railing and looks over the deck below.

HIS POV

Nothing. There is some blood smeared against the side to the boat but no sign of the Creature.

INT. HALLWAY

The crew member is racing down the corridor as fast as he can. The CAMERA FLIES WITH HIM as he heads, terrified, into the darkness of the lower decks...

CUT

INT. LAB.

Gibberish. A torrent of Portuguese gibberish. Only there's no one left who speaks Portuguese.

MORGAN

Slow down...

CREW MEMBER

Foi cara cabasera. No siono sen mater....

WIDE SHOT.

They stand alone in the small ring of light from the spectrometer. This guy is traumatized....

MORGAN

Do you understand him?

WALTER

No.

MORGAN

Okay. Slow down. What is it.

CREW MEMBER

Ferra noi cabesera. Noi buona e prescia capitan mio dio. Es roblena sangre sangre.... Mia cuacoro....

MORGAN

Okay what. Where is this. Dove..

CREW MEMBER

Ferra noi cabesera. Noi buona e prescia capitan mio dio. Es roblena sangre sangre.... Mia cuacoro....

He points toward the door then suddenly freezes.

REVERSE ANGLE.

It's dark-- and mainly shadows, but the image of a seven foot reptile standing fully erect can be seen in the soft light. He cradles something in his hand... still motionless.... It's almost a statue.

CLOSER

The Creature holds the dissected head of his offspring in front of him, looking down at its eyes. He cradles it gently for such a monster... holding it up to him- searching for some sign of life in this child.

WIDER

The three men stand terrified as the Creature clutches the head to his body-- to an area where his heart would be. And then in an instant, there is a loudest, shrillest, most deafening cry any of them have ever heard. The Creature throws his head toward the ceiling and wails from his gut-- the SOUND of grief is unmistakable.

OBSERVATION DECK

They hear it too. All three of them freeze and look toward the locked door that leads from the stairwell. There is a second long mournful CRY... and then there is nothing.

INT. LAB. DAY.

Carnage. The Creature rampages through the place, destroying the lab and everything within it. He smashes beakers, flings the spectrometer, and corners Walter in the far end of the room.

CLOSE UP. WALTER.

It's a strange look, almost a plea, as if to say: *I didn't do it-- I'm just a scientist.* But any nuance is lost in the situation... The Creature slashes his throat in one quick movement and knows he is dead before Walter even does. A look of shock and recognition crosses the scientist's face as he reaches up to his throat and grasps the situation. The Creature turns toward the door.

MORGAN

...is bolting for the hallway. He trips over some of the wreckage then scurries into the corridor in a desperate attempt to escape.

THE CREATURE

...starts after him. It's a weird combination of predatory instinct and something more complicated. As Morgan runs down the hallway, The Creature begins to stalk him long, fluid strides.

STAIRWELL.

Morgan hurries up the spiral staircase that leads to the main deck. The blood from Wayne's encounter still stains the wall and Morgan slips again as he reaches the top. He turns and bolts for the doorway at the other end.

LONG. SHOT. CORRIDOR

He is running at the CAMERA and his halfway down the corridor when the image of "Creature" appears at the other end. Unlike his offspring, this "animal" is much more methodical--taking long even strides and closing the ground between them with each huge step.

OUTSIDE

Morgan gets out on deck and starts heading for the stern. The ship is overgrown with vines at this point, and he has to fight his way through, trying to get to the small inflatable raft at the back of the ship.

THE CREATURE

...has no such problems. The jungle is no obstacle as he moves fluidly up the deck, ducking and weaving through the overgrown vines. Morgan glances back as the Creature gets closer and closer... Ten yards... five yards... two yards.

MORGAN

Is just about to leap for the small dinghy tied up on the back when he is enveloped in Creatures long arms. Instead of killing him, right then and there, the Creature just grabs him in a vice grip, immobilizing him completely.

CLOSER

Webbed hands encase Morgan in a weird embrace. He tries to breathe but it's constricting.... The Creature just clutches him for several seconds, not moving at all. This is more the instinct....

DIFFERENT ANGLE.

Slowly, the Creature begins to drag Morgan up the deck. He's in a virtual straight jacket and the look on his face is powerless and terrified. The creature pulls him toward the Main salon, up to one of the portholes.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

He turns Morgan to face the window--eye to eye with his own reflection.

CLOSER. TWO SHOT.

It's a strange portrait. The Creature forces him to look and it's an odd moment. Two faces in the window...one primitive... one cunning and sophisticated... but which one.

SLOWLY...

The creature begins to squeeze the life out of his prey like a huge boa constrictor. Morgan's rib cage begins to constrict and then to crush as a horrible look of recognition crosses his face. He looks at himself as the life begins to leave him. First he gasps for breath... then he gasps in pain... then he can't gasp anymore.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK.

They hear another long horrifying wail. This one sounds less plaintive and more monstrous... like a war cry.

CARRIE

It's on the boat...

There is another one. They listen.

CARRIE

That was on the boat!

JOHN

We'll we're fine in here, right?

Another wail. Andrew glances down.

JOHN

I mean he can't get in here-- can he?

Still no response.

JOHN

(compulsively "fixing" it)
Look. Here... Here-- look at this.

He pulls a small yellow box from a backpack. It has a light and an antenna on top.

JOHN

It's an ELT. Wayne's emergency transmitter. It has a three hundred mile range... twenty four hour battery. Even if it isn't charted they can still find us.

(beat)

They can...

Another loud plaintive WAIL... predatory.... Yearning... absolutely terrifying. John reaches down and impulsively flips the switch on the transmitter. (He was gonna save it but...) There is another monstrous ROAR from somewhere in the ship. It sounds like a pier creaking. The light on the transmitter blinks yellow. They all look down at it...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN DECK. NIGHT

The creature moves fluidly, like a shadow through the overgrown vines that have consumed the boat. All at once he senses/knows/hears something and stops. The Creature pauses then reverses direction...

CLOSE UP "ELT"

The light on top continues to blink

WIDER OBSERVATION DECK.

There is another "roar". This one is shorter but closer. Almost out of instinct, Andrew shines his light toward the stairwell that is the only entrance to the Observation Deck.

It's silent for a moment... Then all of a sudden --it isn't

CLOSER. STAIRWELL

There a loud BANGING SOUND on the the door at the base of th stairwell. It sounds just like the noise they heard against the hull their first night in the lagoon. Hollow-- ominous: Clang clang clang... It continues repeatedly. Like they are living inside a drum.

CARRIE

(hushed whisper)

Oh my god.

She reaches out instinctively toward Andrew. John sees it but... clang clang clang...

JOHN

(beat)

Can he get in here?

ANDREW

I don't know.

It continues to clang. Rhythmically

JOHN

Look, somebody's coming for us. I sent a hundred e-mails. If we just sit tight somebody's gonna...

CLANG...

John glances over at the blinking light on the transmitter. It flashes in an even rhythm. Then just as quickly, he shut it off. The light stops, and a moment later, so does the banging.

ANDREW

He hears it.

The listen. Nothing

ANDREW

Radio waves. That's a high frequency.

JOHN

Well--is he gone I mean...

ANDREW

No he's not gone.

(beat)

And now, I'm afraid, he knows where we are.

WIDER.

Even though they are inside a room they are alone in the middle of the jungle at night....

JOHN

(starting to lose it)

Well you know we could have been gone by now. If any of you had listened we could have been out here. I said it the first day. I said we should get that boat and float down the tributary.

(looks at Carrie:

"Remember?"

We could have just floated out of here, but no one wanted to listen to me....

ANDREW

(beat--something....)

Float out of here?

JOHN

(beat)

Yeah.

ANDREW

(pause)

....We could still do that.

CUT TO:

THE BLIMP.

It sits partially deflated on its mooring at the far end of the top deck. Even at night the bright orange nylon stands out against the green of the jungle. A flashlight shines across it, scanning the billowy material and finally coming to rest on a helium tank near the base.

INT.OBSERVATION DECK.

The stand at the back of the glass bubble shining a flashlight on the blimp at the other end of the deck.

ANDREW

Alright. It's about seventy percent filled and there's still a tank on it. If I open the thing up it'll take about three minutes to inflate.

JOHN

This is crazy

ANDREW

It definitely has enough lift for three people. I mean, it can't get real high like that, but we just need it to get us down river.

JOHN

Somebody is coming for us. They are....

CARRIE

Not in time....

JOHN

I'm not gonna get in that thing.

CARRIE

(calm)

I am.

Frozen beat. They move on.

CARRIE

How do we get past the door.

ANDREW

Well we've got to get him away from it.

JOHN

You're not opening that door.

ANDREW

(resolve)

Yes we are mate.

(beat)

But first we're gonna open a window.

CUT

A WINDOW

Being pushed open against the vines.

WIDER

The banging is back. Andrew holds the ELT which is now flashing a rhythmic beacon.

ANDREW

Okay, lets try this.

He takes the ELT and places it up against the glass where it can easily transmit outside. He moves across to a corner where Carrie and John are waiting.

THEIR POV

It flashes rhythmically almost in time with the banging on the door. The sounds of the jungle rush back in now that the window has been opened: birds, howler monkeys, the wind....

After several second the BANGING stops.

CARRIE

Oh my Gosh.

It's silent.

CARRIE (cont'd)

Is he gone?

ANDREW

I'm not sure.

CARRIE

How do we know when it's safe

ANDREW

When we see him

CLOSE UP. ELT

It blinks rhythmically, the yellow beacon sending out a radio signal. Flash... Flash... Flash...

ANDREW (cont'd)

Okay, let's start moving downstairs...

JOHN

We are not opening that door.

CARRIE

We don't have a choice sweetie...

(resolve)

We don't.

CLOSER

John looks at his wife for a beat. Calm. Confident. Poised. Changed. He nods. They start down stairs as...

CRASH....

A torrent of glass shatters the room....

REVERSE ANGLE.

The Creature literally explodes through the window-- taking half the wall with him.

ANDREW

Go! Go!

They fly down the staircase, the only conventional exit to the room. The Creature takes stock of his surroundings for a beat, then grabs the flashing yellow light next to him.

INT. CORRIDOR

They are running down the hallway toward a ladder at the far end. When they reach it Andrew pops a hatch and waits while the others hurry through. He goes through last and shuts it behind him.

EXT. TOP DECK.

He seals the hatch by turning the wheel on the top and jamming a huge cotter pin. They catch their breath and then glance toward the stern. The partially inflated blimp billows in the wind. The orange nylon gently blows back and forth.

CLANG!

...this time on the hatch right below them. The sound picks up again, steadily... insistently...

WIDER

They run to the blimp. Andrew opens the valve and a rush of helium starts to fill the balloon. The CLANGING continues as the huge airbag starts to return to its original shape. After a moment or two it begins to tug on the moorings. The small "dinghy" at the bottom is barely big enough for two people...

JOHN

I'm not doing this.

CARRIE

There's no choice.

JOHN

I'm not getting in that thing. We've got help coming Carrie. I'm not gonna do this.

The CLANGING stops. The blimp has pulled the ropes taught and is suddenly airborne again.

ANDREW

(quickly-- to Carrie)
Alright. You get in first.

She scrambles into the "raft."

Doctor.. JOHN

John hesitates.

ANDREW
Please-- let's go.

JOHN
(pulls back)
I...

ANDREW
It can hold three of us. Honestly...

CARRIE
John, come on...

It blows sideways, Andrew stabilizes it.

ANDREW
(beat)
Fine.

He climbs in first.

CARRIE
John. Please get in here.

Andrew starts to untie one of the ropes. He keeps holding on to give John a last chance.

JOHN
Alright.

The dirigible tips as he tries to climb in. It's like boarding a life boat in a rolling sea. There is barely room for two people and he has to pull himself up on his belly. It's awkward. His legs dangle over the sides.

JOHN
I can't.

ANDREW
Here. Cmon. You got it....

But at that moment John suddenly freezes. He clutches onto the side of the "gondola" which has started to tip sideways.

JOHN
I'm stuck.

He looks down in horror.

UP ANGLE

A long reptilian "claw" has a vice grip on his leg....

WIDER

John clutches desperately onto the side of the raft. Andrew has tossed off the mooring lines and the thing has started to climb, pulling John in two directions. It's basically like being on the rack.

JOHN

I can't hold it...

CARRIE

(desperate)

I've got you.

The blimp starts to climb. John's grip slips. He falls from the side of the gondola, slams the rail and then plummets down three decks into the dark water of the lagoon... Alone....

UNDERWATER

It's murky and black. He sinks for a beat before sputtering to the surface. There is no Creature.

THE BLIMP

Starts to rise away from him up toward the tree line. Dawn is breaking

JOHN

(far away)

Carrie... Carrieee....

She pushes the stick forward and yanks it to the right.

ANDREW

We can't put down in there...

CARRIE

I'm not gonna leave him.

ANDREW

I'll throw him a line.

WATER LEVEL.

Alone and helpless. But alone. John treads water in the black of the lagoon.

BLIMP

Andrew maneuvers it lower letting one of the mooring lines drag in the water.

JOHN (OS)
I'm here... over here.

The place is dark and overgrown and the nylon brushes against some vines.

ANDREW
Shit...

JOHN

Flails in the darkness. Finally he sees the rope.

John swims frantically as Andrew pulls the blimp toward the center of the lagoon. Finally he's able to grab it.

CARRIE
Come on! Climb up.

He tries but it's no use. He's a psychiatrist, not an athlete.

CARRIE

Pushes the stick down.

ANDREW
You can't.

CARRIE
He's not strong enough.

THE BLIMP

Comes down nearly on top of him. John clutches the rope. Carrie reaches over the edge extending her hand. She can almost reach him.

JOHN

Reaches out trying to grasp hers. All at once, he is pulled violently under water.

CARRIE
John!

LAGOON

He is gone for several seconds. A beat later he comes sputtering to the surface.

CARRIE

Lunges out of the gondola, extending her hand. Then, all at once, she does what he didn't.

"Carrie grasps his hand and yanks him toward "the boat." She pulls him over to the side and then with a burst of strength (that she obviously didn't know she had) pulls him over the metal railing and into the Gondola itself.

WIDER

It's heavy now and the thing has trouble climbing. Andrew pulls back on the stick but it's moving more forward than up.

ANDREW

C'mon you bugger....

It starts to climb slowly. Two feet... Three feet. It's just beginning to get airborne when two prehistoric "claws" suddenly break the surface and clutch onto the metal pipe at the back of this makeshift gondola

CLOSER

It's dark and only the shadowy outline of the Creature can be seen against the lagoon. The blimp begins to list backwards.

CARRIE

Oh my God.

Andrew looks frantically around the floor... He finds an orange flare gun with the emergency supplies and loads a flare into the front. They are starting to tip vertical when Andrew points the flare gun directly over the stern. The Creature's head is submerged but John fires the flare directly into the water from only a couple of feet away. It illuminates the entire place in a weird phosphorescent glow.

A moment later one hand releases.... A beat after that the other lets go, too.

WIDER

It's an eerie sight: This bright orange airbag illuminated from below by the bright glowing water of the lagoon. Slowly, this man-made contraption starts to do the one thing that the creature can't... It flies.

WIDER STILL

The light from the flare begins to fade as the blimp rises slowly into the air. It catches the first rays of dawn coming through the trees.

CLOSER. GONDOLA

The three of them are crammed together-- literally a life boat. No one says anything though as they rise above the tree line in silence. John looks over at his wife. She stares straight ahead at the jungle stretching out in front of her.

EXTREME WIDE. AMAZON

Andrew takes the blimp higher still, over the top of the tree line. He follows the tributary away from the lagoon toward the huge Amazon itself....

[THE END]